TALES

OF

A TRAVELLER.

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TALES

OF

A TRAVELLER.

BY GEOFFREY CRAYON, GENT.

I am neither your minotaure, nor your centaure, nor your satyr, nor your hyæna, nor your babion, but your meer traveller, believe me.

BEN JONSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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PART II.

CONTINUED.

BUCKTHORNE

AND HIS

FRIENDS.

GRAVE REFLECTIONS OF A DISAPPOINTED MAN.

Mr. Buckthorne had paused at the death of his uncle, and the downfall of his great expectations, which formed, as he said, an epoch in his history; and it was not until some little time afterwards, and in a very sober mood, that he resumed his party-coloured narrative.

After leaving the remains of my defunct uncle, said he, when the gate closed between me and what was once to have been mine, I felt thrust out naked into the world, and completely abandoned to fortune. What was to become of me? I had been brought up to nothing but expectations, and they had all been disap-

pointed. I had no relations to look to for counsel or assistance. The world seemed all to have died away from me. Wave after wave of relationship had ebbed off, and I was left a mere hulk upon the strand. I am not apt to be greatly cast down, but at this time I felt sadly disheartened. I could not realize my situation, nor form a conjecture how I was to get forward. I was now to endeavour to make money. The idea was new and strange to me. It was like being asked to discover the philosopher's stone. I had never thought about money otherwise than to put my hand into my pocket and find it; or if there were none there, to wait until a new supply came from home. I had considered life as a mere space of time to be filled up with enjoyments: but to have it portioned out into long hours and days of toil, merely that I might gain bread to give me strength to toil on—to labour but for the purpose of perpetuating a life of labour, was new and appalling to me. This may appear a very simple matter to some; but it will be understood

by every unlucky wight in my predicament, who has had the misfortune of being born to great expectations.

I passed several days in rambling about the scenes of my boyhood; partly because I absolutely did not know what to do with myself, and partly because I did not know that I should ever see them again. I clung to them as one clings to a wreck, though he knows he must eventually cast himself loose and swim for his life. I sat down on a little hill within sight of my paternal home, but I did not venture to approach it, for I felt compunction at the thoughtlessness with which I had dissipated my patrimony; but was I to blame, when I had the rich possessions of my curmudgeon of an uncle in expectation?

The new possessor of the place was making great alterations. The house was almost rebuilt. The trees which stood about it were cut down: my mother's flower-garden was thrown into a lawn—all was undergoing a change. I turned my back upon it with a

sigh, and rambled to another part of the country.

How thoughtful a little adversity makes one! As I came within sight of the school-house where I had so often been flogged in the cause of wisdom, you would hardly have recognized the truant boy, who, but a few years since, had eloped so heedlessly from its walls. I leaned over the paling of the play-ground, and watched the scholars at their games, and looked to see if there might not be some urchin among them like I was once, full of gay dreams about life and the world. The play-ground seemed smaller than when I used to sport about it. The house and park, too, of the neighbouring squire, the father of the cruel Sacharissa, had shrunk in size and diminished in magnificence. The distant hills no longer appeared so far off, and, alas! no longer awakened ideas of a fairy land beyond.

As I was rambling pensively through a neighbouring meadow, in which I had many a time gathered primroses, I met the very peda-

gogue who had been the tyrant and dread of my boyhood. I had sometimes vowed to myself, when suffering under his rod, that I would have my revenge if I ever met him when I had grown to be a man. The time had come; but I had no disposition to keep my vow. The few years which had matured me into a vigorous man had shrunk him into decrepitude. He appeared to have had a paralytic stroke. I looked at him, and wondered that this poor helpless mortal could have been an object of terror to me; that I should have watched with anxiety the glance of that failing eye, or dreaded the power of that trembling hand. He tottered feebly along the path, and had some difficulty in getting over a stile. I ran and assisted him. He looked at me with surprise, but did not recognize me, and made a low bow of humility and thanks. I had no disposition to make myself known, for I felt that I had nothing to boast of. The pains he had taken, and the pains he had inflicted, had been equally useless. His repeated predictions were fully verified,

and I felt that little Jack Buckthorne the idle boy had grown to be a very good-for-nothing man.

This is all very comfortless detail; but as I have told you of my follies, it is meet that I show you how for once I was schooled for them. The most thoughtless of mortals will some time or other have his day of gloom, when he will be compelled to reflect.

I felt on this occasion as if I had a kind of penance to perform, and I made a pilgrimage in expiation of my past levity. Having passed a night at Leamington, I set off by a private path, which leads up a hill through a grove and across quiet fields, till I came to the small village, or rather hamlet, of Lenington. I sought the village church. It is an old low edifice of grey stone, on the brow of a small hill, looking over fertile fields, towards where the proud towers of Warwick castle lift themselves against the distant horizon.

A part of the churchyard is shaded by large trees. Under one of them my mother lay buried.

You have no doubt thought me a light, heartless being. I thought myself so; but there are moments of adversity which let us into some feelings of our nature to which we might otherwise remain perpetual strangers.

I sought my mother's grave: the weeds were already matted over it, and the tombstone was half hid among nettles. I cleared them away, and they stung my hands; but I was heedless of the pain, for my heart ached too severely. I sat down on the grave, and read over and over again the epitaph on the stone.

It was simple,—but it was true. I had written it myself. I had tried to write a poetical epitaph, but in vain; my feelings refused to utter themselves in rhyme. My heart had gradually been filling during my lonely wanderings; it was now charged to the brim, and overflowed. I sunk upon the grave, and buried my face in the tall grass, and wept like a child. —Yes, I wept in manhood upon the grave, as I had in infancy upon the bosom of my mother. Alas! how little do we appreciate a mother's

tenderness while living! how heedless are we in youth of all her anxieties and kindness! But when she is dead and gone; when the cares and coldness of the world come withering to our hearts; when we find how hard it is to find true sympathy;—how few love us for ourselves; how few will befriend us in our misfortunes—then it is that we think of the mother we have lost. It is true I had always loved my mother, even in my most heedless days; but I felt how inconsiderate and ineffectual had been my love. My heart melted as I retraced the days of infancy, when I was led by a mother's hand, and rocked to sleep in a mother's arms, and was without care or sorrow. "O my mother!" exclaimed I, burying my face again in the grass of the grave; "O that I were once more by your side; sleeping never to wake again on the cares and troubles of this world."

I am not naturally of a morbid temperament, and the violence of my emotion gradually exhausted itself. It was a hearty, honest, natural discharge of grief, which had been slowly ac-

cumulating, and gave me wonderful relief. I rose from the grave as if I had been offering up a sacrifice, and I felt as if that sacrifice had been accepted.

I sat down again on the grass, and plucked, one by one, the weeds from her grave: the tears trickled more slowly down my cheeks, and ceased to be bitter. It was a comfort to think that she had died before sorrow and poverty came upon her child, and that all his great expectations were blasted.

I leaned my cheek upon my hand, and looked upon the landscape. Its quiet beauty soothed me. The whistle of a peasant from an adjoining field came cheerily to my ear. I seemed to respire hope and comfort with the free air that whispered through the leaves, and played lightly with my hair, and dried the tears upon my cheek. A lark, rising from the field before me, and leaving as it were a stream of song behind him as he rose, lifted my fancy with him. He hovered in the air just above the place where the towers of Warwick castle marked the hori-

zon, and seemed as if fluttering with delight at his own melody. "Surely," thought I, "if there were such a thing as transmigration of souls, this might be taken for some poet, let loose from earth, but still reveling in song, and caroling about fair fields and lordly towers."

At this moment the long-forgotten feeling of poetry rose within me. A thought sprung at once into my mind.—"I will become an author!" said I. "I have hitherto indulged in poetry as a pleasure, and it has brought me nothing but pain; let me try what it will do when I cultivate it with devotion as a pursuit."

The resolution thus suddenly aroused within me heaved a load from off my heart. I felt a confidence in it from the very place where it was formed. It seemed as though my mother's spirit whispered it to me from her grave. "I will henceforth," said I, "endeavour to be all that she fondly imagined me. I will endeavour to act as if she were witness of my actions; I will endeavour to acquit myself in such a manner

that, when I revisit her grave, there may at least be no compunctious bitterness in my tears."

I bowed down and kissed the turf in solemn attestation of my vow. I plucked some primroses that were growing there, and laid them next my heart. I left the church-yard with my spirits once more lifted up, and set out a third time for London, in the character of an author.——

Here my companion made a pause, and I waited in anxious suspense, hoping to have a whole volume of literary life unfolded to me. He seemed, however, to have sunk into a fit of pensive musing, and when, after some time, I gently roused him by a question or two as to his literary career,

" No," said he, smiling, " over that part of my story I wish to leave a cloud. Let the mysteries of the craft rest sacred for me. Let those who have never ventured into the republic of letters still look upon it as a fairy land. Let them suppose the author the very being they picture him from his works—I am not the

man to mar their illusion. I am not the man to hint, while one is admiring the silken web of Persia, that it has been spun from the entrails of a miserable worm."

"Well," said I, "if you will tell me nothing of your literary history, let me know at least if you have had any farther intelligence from Doubting Castle."

"Willingly," replied he, "though I have but little to communicate."

THE BOOBY SQUIRE.

A LONG time elapsed, said Buckthorne, without my receiving any accounts of my cousin and his estate. Indeed, I felt so much soreness on the subject, that I wished if possible to shut it from my thoughts. At length chance took me to that part of the country, and I could not refrain from making some inquiries.

I learnt that my cousin had grown up ignorant, self-willed, and clownish. His ignorance and clownishness had prevented his mingling with the neighbouring gentry: in spite of his great fortune, he had been unsuccessful in an attempt to gain the hand of the daughter of the parson, and had at length shrunk into the limits of such society as a mere man of wealth can gather in a country neighbourhood.

He kept horses and hounds, and a roaring table, at which were collected the loose livers of the country round, and the shabby gentlemen of a village in the vicinity. When he could get no other company, he would smoke and drink with his own servants, who in turns fleeced and despised him. Still, with all his apparent prodigality, he had a leaven of the old man in him which showed that he was his true born son. He lived far within his income, was vulgar in his expenses, and penurious in many points where a gentleman would be extravagant. His house servants were obliged occasionally to work on his estate, and part of the pleasure-grounds were ploughed up and devoted to husbandry.

His table, though plentiful, was coarse; his liquors strong and bad; and more ale and whisky were expended in his establishment than generous wine. He was loud and arrogant at his own table, and exacted a rich man's homage from his vulgar and obsequious guests.

As to Iron John, his old grandfather, he had grown impatient of the tight hand his own

grandson kept over him, and quarrelled with him soon after he came to the estate. The old man had retired to the neighbouring village, where he lived on the legacy of his late master, in a small cottage, and was as seldom seen out of it as a rat out of his hole in daylight.

The cub, like Caliban, seemed to have an instinctive attachment to his mother; she resided with him, but, from long habit, she acted more as a servant than as mistress of the mansion, for she toiled in all the domestic drudgery, and was oftener in the kitchen than the parlour. Such was the information which I collected of my rival cousin who had so unexpectedly elbowed me out of all my expectations.

I now felt an irresistible hankering to pay a visit to this scene of my boyhood, and to get a peep at the odd kind of life that was passing within the mansion of my maternal ancestors. I determined to do so in disguise. My booby cousin had never seen enough of me to be very familiar with my countenance, and a few years make great difference between youth and man-

hood. I understood he was a breeder of cattle, and proud of his stock; I dressed myself therefore as a substantial farmer, and with the assistance of a red scratch that came low down on my forehead, made a complete change in my physiognomy.

It was past three o'clock when I arrived at the gate of the park, and was admitted by an old woman, who was washing in a dilapidated building which had once been a porter's lodge. I advanced up the remains of a noble avenue, many of the trees of which had been cut down and sold for timber. The grounds were in scarcely better keeping than during my uncle's lifetime. The grass was overgrown with weeds, and the trees wanted pruning and clearing of dead branches. Cattle were grazing about the lawns, and ducks and geese swimming in the fish-ponds. The road to the house bore very few traces of carriage wheels, as my cousin received few visitors but such as came on foot or horseback, and never used a carriage himself. Once indeed, as I was told, he had the old

family carriage drawn out from among the dust and cobwebs of the coach-house and furbished up, and had driven, with his mother, to the village church to take formal possession of the family pew; but there was such hooting and laughing after them, as they passed through the village, and such giggling and bantering about the church-door, that the pageant had never made a re-appearance.

As I approached the house a legion of whelps sallied out, barking at me, accompanied by the low howling, rather than barking, of two old worn out blood-hounds, which I recognized for the ancient life-guards of my uncle. The house had still a neglected random appearance, though much altered for the better since my last visit. Several of the windows were broken and patched up with boards, and others had been bricked up to save taxes. I observed smoke, however, rising from the chimneys, a phenomenon rarely witnessed in the ancient establishment. On passing that part of the house where the dining-room was situated, I heard the sound of boister-

ous merriment, where three or four voices were talking at once, and oaths and laughter were horribly mingled.

The uproar of the dogs had brought a servant to the door, a tall hard-fisted country clown, with a livery coat put over the under garments of a ploughman. I requested to see the master of the house, but was told he was at dinner with some "gemmen" of the neighbourhood. I made known my business, and sent in to know if I might talk with the master about his cattle, for I felt a great desire to have a peep at him at his orgies.

Word was returned that he was engaged with company, and could not attend to business, but that if I could step in and take a drink of something, I was heartily welcome. I accordingly entered the hall, where whips and hats of all kinds and shapes were lying on an oaken table; two or three clownish servants were lounging about; every thing had a look of confusion and carelessness.

The apartments through which I passed had

the same air of departed gentility and sluttish housekeeping. The once rich curtains were faded and dusty, the furniture greased and tarnished. On entering the dining-room I found a number of odd, vulgar-looking, rustic gentlemen seated round a table on which were bottles, decanters, tankards, pipes, and tobacco. Several dogs were lying about the room, or sitting and watching their masters, and one was gnawing a bone under a side table. The master of the feast sat at the head of the board. He was greatly altered. He had grown thickset and rather gummy, with a fiery foxy head of hair. There was a singular mixture of foolishness, arrogance, and conceit, in his countenance. He was dressed in a vulgarly fine style, with leather breeches, a red waistcoat, and green coat, and was evidently, like his guests, a little flushed with drinking. The whole company stared at me with a whimsical muzzy look, like men whose senses were a little obfuscated by beer rather than wine.

My cousin (God forgive me! the appellation

sticks in my throat), my cousin invited me with awkward civility, or, as he intended it, condescension, to sit to the table and drink. We talked, as usual, about the weather, the crops, politics, and hard times. My cousin was a loud politician, and evidently accustomed to talk without contradiction at his own table. He was amazingly loyal, and talked of standing by the throne to the last guinea, "as every gentleman of fortune should do." The village exciseman, who was half asleep, could just ejaculate "very true" to every thing he said. The conversation turned upon cattle; he boasted of his breed, his mode of crossing it, and of the general management of his estate. This unluckily drew on a history of the place and of the family. He spoke of my late uncle with the greatest irreverence, which I could easily forgive. He mentioned my name, and my blood began to boil. He described my frequent visits to my uncle, when I was a lad, and I found the varlet, even at that time, imp as he was, had known that he was to inherit the

estate. He described the scene of my uncle's death and the opening of the will with a degree of coarse humour that I had not expected from him; and, vexed as I was, I could not help joining in the laugh, for I have always relished a joke, even though made at my own expense. He went on to speak of my various pursuits, my strolling freak, and that somewhat nettled me; at length he talked of my parents. He ridiculed my father; I stomached even that, though with great difficulty. He mentioned my mother with a sneer, and in an instant he lay sprawling at my feet.

Here a tumult succeeded: the table was nearly overturned; bottles, glasses, and tankards, rolled crashing and clattering about the floor. The company seized hold of both of us to keep us from doing any farther mischief. I struggled to get loose, for I was boiling with fury. My cousin defied me to strip and fight him on the lawn. I agreed, for I felt the strength of a giant in me, and I longed to pommel him soundly.

Away then we were borne. A ring was formed. I had a second assigned me in true boxing style. My cousin, as he advanced to fight, said something about his generosity in showing me such fair play when I had made such an unprovoked attack upon him at his own table. "Stop there," cried I, in a rage, "unprovoked? know that I am John Buckthorne, and you have insulted the memory of my mother."

The lout was suddenly struck by what I said: he drew back, and thought for a moment.

"Nay, damn it," said he, "that's too much—that's clean another thing—I've a mother myself—and no one shall speak ill of her, bad as she is."

He paused again: nature seemed to have a rough struggle in his rude bosom.

"Damn it, cousin," cried he, "I'm sorry for what I said. Thou'st served me right in knocking me down, and I like thee the better for it. Here's my hand; come and live with me,

and damn me but the best room in the house, and the best horse in the stable, shall be at thy service."

I declare to you I was strongly moved at this instance of nature breaking her way through such a lump of flesh. I forgave the fellow in a moment his two heinous crimes, of having been born in wedlock, and inheriting my estate. I shook the hand he offered me, to convince him that I bore him no ill-will; and then making my way through the gaping crowd of toadeaters, bade adieu to my uncle's domains for ever.—This is the last I have seen or heard of my cousin, or of the domestic concerns of Doubting Castle.

THE STROLLING MANAGER.

As I was walking one morning with Buckthorne near one of the principal theatres, he directed my attention to a group of those equivocal beings that may often be seen hovering about the stage doors of theatres. They were marvellously ill favoured in their attire, their coats buttoned up to their chins; yet they wore their hats smartly on one side, and had a certain knowing, dirty-gentleman-like air which is common to the subalterns of the drama. Buckthorne knew them well by early experience.

"These," said he, "are the ghosts of departed kings and heroes; fellows who sway sceptres and truncheons; command kingdoms and armies; and after giving away realms and treasures over night, have scarce a shilling to

pay for a breakfast in the morning. Yet they have the true vagabond abhorrence of all useful and industrious employment; and they have their pleasures too: one of which is to lounge in this way in the sunshine, at the stage door, during rehearsals, and make hackneyed theatrical jokes on all passers-by. Nothing is more traditional and legitimate than the stage. Old scenery, old clothes, old sentiments, old ranting, and old jokes are handed down from generation to generation; and will probably continue to be so until time shall be no more. Every hanger-on of a theatre becomes a wag by inheritance, and flourishes about at tap-rooms and sixpenny clubs with the property jokes of the green-room."

While amusing ourselves with reconnoitring this group, we noticed one in particular who appeared to be the oracle. He was a weather-beaten veteran, a little bronzed by time and beer, who had no doubt grown gray in the parts of robbers, cardinals, Roman senators, and walking noblemen.

"There is something in the set of that hat,

and the turn of that physiognomy, that is extremely familiar to me," said Buckthorne. He looked a little closer. "I cannot be mistaken," added he, "that must be my old brother of the truncheon Flimsey, the tragic hero of the Strolling Company."

It was he in fact. The poor fellow showed evident signs that times went hard with him, he was so finely and shabbily dressed. His coat was somewhat threadbare, and of the Lord Townly cut; single breasted, and scarcely capable of meeting in front of his body, which, from long intimacy, had acquired the symmetry and robustness of a beer barrel. He wore a pair of dingy-white stockinet pantaloons, which had much ado to reach his waistcoat; a great quantity of dirty cravat; and a pair of old russet-coloured tragedy boots.

When his companions had dispersed, Buckthorne drew him aside, and made himself known to him. The tragic veteran could scarcely recognize him, or believe that he was really his quondam associate, "little gentleman Jack."

Buckthorne invited him to a neighbouring coffee-house to talk over old times; and in the course of a little while we were put in possession of his history in brief.

He had continued to act the heroes in the strolling company for some time after Buckthorne had left it, or rather had been driven from it so abruptly. At length the manager died, and the troop was thrown into confusion. Every one aspired to the crown, every one was for taking the lead; and the manager's widow, although a tragedy queen, and a brimstone to boot, pronounced it utterly impossible for a woman to keep any control over such a set of tempestuous rascallions.

"Upon this hint, I spake," said Flimsey. "I stepped forward, and offered my services in the most effectual way. They were accepted. In a week's time I married the widow, and succeeded to the throne. 'The funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage table,' as Hamlet says. But the ghost of my predecessor never haunted me; and I inherited crowns,

sceptres, bowls, daggers, and all the stage trappings and trumpery, not omitting the widow, without the least molestation.

"I now led a flourishing life of it; for our company was pretty strong and attractive, and as my wife and I took the heavy parts of tragedy, it was a great saving to the treasury. We carried off the palm from all the rival shows at country fairs; and I assure you we have even drawn full houses, and been applauded by the critics at Bartlemy Fair itself, though we had Astley's troop, the Irish giant, and 'the death of Nelson' in waxwork, to contend against.

"I soon began to experience, however, the cares of command. I discovered that there were cabals breaking out in the company, headed by the clown, who you may recollect was a terribly peevish, fractious fellow, and always in ill humour. I had a great mind to turn him off at once, but I could not do without him, for there was not a droller scoundrel on the stage. His very shape was comic, for he had but to turn his back upon the audience, and all the

ladies were ready to die with laughing. He felt his importance, and took advantage of it. He would keep the audience in a continual roar, and then come behind the scenes, and fret and fume, and play the very devil. I excused a great deal in him, however, knowing that comic actors are a little prone to this infirmity of temper.

"I had another trouble of a nearer and dearer nature to struggle with, which was the affection of my wife. As ill luck would have it, she took it into her head to be very fond of me, and became intolerably jealous. I could not keep a pretty girl in the company, and hardly dared embrace an ugly one, even when my part required it. I have known her reduce a fine lady to tatters, 'to very rags,' as Hamlet says, in an instant, and destroy one of the very best dresses in the wardrobe, merely because she saw me kiss her at the side scenes; though I give you my honour it was done merely by way of rehearsal.

"This was doubly annoying, because I have a

natural liking to pretty faces, and wish to have them about me; and because they are indispensable to the success of a company at a fair, where one has to vie with so many rival theatres. But when once a jealous wife gets a freak in her head, there's no use in talking of interest or any thing else. Egad, sirs, I have more than once trembled when, during a fit of her tantrums, she was playing high tragedy, and flourishing her tin dagger on the stage, lest she should give way to her humour, and stab some fancied rival in good earnest.

"I went on better, however, than could be expected, considering the weakness of my flesh, and the violence of my rib. I had not a much worse time of it than old Jupiter, whose spouse was continually ferreting out some new intrigue, and making the heavens almost too hot to hold him.

"At length, as luck would have it, we were performing at a country fair, when I understood the theatre of a neighbouring town to be vacant. I had always been desirous to be enrolled in a

settled company, and the height of my desire was to get on a par with a brother-in-law, who was manager of a regular theatre, and who had looked down upon me. Here was an opportunity not to be neglected. I concluded an agreement with the proprietors, and in a few days opened the theatre with great eclat.

Behold me now at the summit of my ambition, "the high top-gallant of my joy," as Romeo says. No longer a chieftain of a wandering tribe, but a monarch of a legitimate throne, and entitled to call even the great potentates of Covent-garden and Drury-lane cousins. You, no doubt, think my happiness complete. Alas, sirs! I was one of the most uncomfortable dogs living. No one knows, who has not tried, the miseries of a manager; but above all, of a country manager.—No one can conceive the contentions and quarrels within doors, the oppressions and vexations from without. I was pestered with the bloods and loungers of a country town, who infested my green-room, and played the mischief among my

actresses. But there was no shaking them off. It would have been ruin to affront them; for though troublesome friends, they would have been dangerous enemies. Then there were the village critics and village amateurs, who were continually tormenting me with advice, and getting into a passion if I would not take it; especially the village doctor and the village attorney, who had both been to London occasionally, and knew what acting should be.

I had also to manage as arrant a crew of scape-graces as ever were collected together within the walls of a theatre. I had been obliged to combine my original troop with some of the former troop of the theatre, who were favourites of the public. Here was a mixture that produced perpetual ferment. They were all the time either fighting or frolicking with each other, and I scarcely know which mood was least troublesome. If they quarrelled, every thing went wrong; and if they were friends, they were continually playing off some prank upon each other or upon me; for I had

unhappily acquired among them the character of an easy, good-natured fellow—the worst character that a manager can possess.

Their waggery at times drove me almost crazy; for there is nothing so vexatious as the hackneyed tricks and hoaxes and pleasantries of a veteran band of theatrical vagabonds. I relished them well enough, it is true, while I was merely one of the company, but as manager I found them detestable. They were incessantly bringing some disgrace upon the theatre by their tavern frolics, and their pranks about the country town. All my lectures about the importance of keeping up the dignity of the profession and the respectability of the company were in vain. The villains could not sympathize with the delicate feelings of a man in station. They even trifled with the seriousness of stage business. I have had the whole piece interrupted, and a crowded audience of at least twenty-five pounds kept waiting, because the actors had hid away the breeches of Rosalind; and have known Hamlet to stalk solemnly

on to deliver his soliloquy, with a dishclout pinned to his skirts. Such are the baleful consequences of a manager's getting a character for good nature.

I was intolerably annoyed, too, by the great actors who came down starring, as it is called, from London. Of all baneful influences, keep me from that of a London star. A first-rate actress, going the rounds of the country theatres, is as bad as a blazing comet whisking about the heavens, and shaking fire and plagues and discords from its tail.

The moment one of these "heavenly bodies" appeared in my horizon, I was sure to be in hot water. My theatre was overrun by provincial dandies, copper-washed counterfeits of Bond-street loungers, who are always proud to be in the train of an actress from town, and anxious to be thought on exceeding good terms with her. It was really a relief to me when some random young nobleman would come in pursuit of the bait, and awe all this small fry at a distance. I have always felt myself more at

ease with a nobleman than with the dandy of a country town.

And then the injuries I suffered in my personal dignity and my managerial authority from the visits of these great London actors! 'Sblood, sir, I was no longer master of myself on my throne. I was hectored and lectured in my own green-room, and made an absolute nincompoop on my own stage. There is no tyrant so absolute and capricious as a London star at a country theatre. I dreaded the sight of all of them, and yet if I did not engage them, I was sure of having the public clamorous against me. They drew full houses, and appeared to be making my fortune; but they swallowed up all the profits by their insatiable demands. They were absolute tape-worms to my little theatre; the more it took in the poorer it grew. They were sure to leave me with an exhausted public, empty benches, and a score or two of affronts to settle among the town's folk, in consequence of misunderstandings about the taking of places.

But the worst thing I had to undergo in my managerial career was patronage. Oh, sir! of all things deliver me from the patronage of the great people of a country town. It was my ruin. You must know that this town, though small, was filled with feuds, and parties, and great folks; being a busy little trading and manufacturing town. The mischief was that their greatness was of a kind not to be settled by reference to the court calendar, or college of heraldry; it was therefore the most quarrelsome kind of greatness in existence. You smile, sir, but let me tell you there are no feuds more furious than the frontier feuds which take place in these "debatable lands" of gentility. The most violent dispute that I ever knew in high life was one which occurred at a country town, on a question of precedence between the ladies of a manufacturer of pins and a manufacturer of needles.

At the town where I was situated there were perpetual altercations of the kind. The head manufacturer's lady, for instance, was at

daggers-drawings with the head shopkeeper's, and both were too rich and had too many friends to be treated lightly. The doctors' and lawyers' ladies held their heads still higher; but they in their turn were kept in check by the wife of a country banker, who kept her own carriage; while a masculine widow of cracked character and second-hand fashion, who lived in a large house, and claimed to be in some way related to nobility, looked down upon them all. To be sure her manners were not over elegant, nor her fortune over large; but then, sir, her blood—oh, her blood carried it all hollow; there was no withstanding a woman with such blood in her veins.

After all, her claims to high connexion were questioned, and she had frequent battles for precedence at balls and assemblies with some of the sturdy dames of the neighbourhood, who stood upon their wealth and their virtue; but then she had two dashing daughters, who dressed as fine as dragons, had as high blood as their mother, and seconded her in every thing:

so they carried their point with high heads, and every body hated, abused, and stood in awe of the Fantadlins.

Such was the state of the fashionable world in this self-important little town. Unluckily, I was not as well acquainted with its politics as I should have been. I had found myself a stranger and in great perplexities during my first season; I determined, therefore, to put myself under the patronage of some powerful name, and thus to take the field with the prejudices of the public in my favour. I cast round my thoughts for the purpose, and in an evil hour they fell upon Mrs. Fantadlin. No one seemed to me to have a more absolute sway in the world of fashion. I had always noticed that her party slammed the box door the loudest at the theatre; that her daughters entered like a tempest with a flutter of red shawls and feathers; had most beaux attending on them; talked and laughed during the performance, and used quizzing glasses incessantly. The first evening of my theatre's re-

opening, therefore, was announced in staring capitals on the play-bills, as under the patronage of "the Honourable Mrs. Fantadlin."

Sir, the whole community flew to arms! Presume to patronize the theatre! Insufferable! And then for me to dare to term her 'The Honourable!' What claim had she to the title, forsooth! The fashionable world had long groaned under the tyranny of the Fantadlins, and were glad to make a common cause against this new instance of assumption. All minor feuds were forgotten. The doctor's lady and the lawyer's lady met together, and the manufacturer's lady and the shopkeeper's lady kissed each other; and all, headed by the banker's lady, voted the theatre a *bore,* and determined to encourage nothing but the Indian Jugglers and Mr. Walker's Eidouranion.

Such was the rock on which I split. I never got over the patronage of the Fantadlin family. My house was deserted; my actors grew discontented because they were ill paid; my door became a hammering place for every

bailiff in the country; and my wife became more and more shrewish and tormenting the more I wanted comfort.

I tried for a time the usual consolation of a harassed and henpecked man: I took to the bottle, and tried to tipple away my cares, but in vain. I don't mean to decry the bottle; it is no doubt an excellent remedy in many cases, but it did not answer in mine. It cracked my voice, coppered my nose, but neither improved my wife nor my affairs. My establishment became a scene of confusion and peculation. I was considered a ruined man, and of course fair game for every one to pluck at, as every one plunders a sinking ship. Day after day some of the troop deserted, and like deserting soldiers carried off their arms and accoutrements with them. In this manner my wardrobe took legs and walked away, my finery strolled all over the country, my swords and daggers glittered in every barn, until, at last, my tailor made "one fell swoop," and carried off three dress coats, half a dozen doublets, and nineteen pair

of flesh-coloured pantaloons. This was the "be all and the end all" of my fortune. I no longer hesitated what to do. Egad, thought I, since stealing is the order of the day, I'll steal too; so I secretly gathered together the jewels of my wardrobe, packed up a hero's dress in a handkerchief, slung it on the end of a tragedy sword, and quietly stole off at dead of night, "the bell then beating one," leaving my queen and kingdom to the mercy of my rebellious subjects, and my merciless foes the bumbailiffs.

Such, sir, was the "end of all my greatness." I was heartily cured of all passion for governing, and returned once more into the ranks. I had for some time the usual run of an actor's life: I played in various country theatres, at fairs, and in barns; sometimes hard pushed, sometimes flush, until, on one occasion, I came within an ace of making my fortune, and becoming one of the wonders of the age.

I was playing the part of Richard the Third in a country barn, and in my best style, for, to tell the truth, I was a little in liquor, and the

critics of the company always observed that I played with most effect when I had a glass too much. There was a thunder of applause when I came to that part where Richard cries for, "a horse! a horse!" My cracked voice had always a wonderful effect here; it was like two voices run into one; you would have thought two men had been calling for a horse, or that Richard had called for two horses. And when I flung the taunt at Richmond, "Richard is *hoarse* with calling thee to arms," I thought the barn would have come down about my ears with the raptures of the audience.

The very next morning a person waited upon me at my lodgings; I saw at once he was a gentleman by his dress, for he had a large brooch in his bosom, thick rings on his fingers, and used a quizzing glass. And a gentleman he proved to be, for I soon ascertained that he was a kept author, or kind of literary tailor to one of the great London theatres; one who worked under the manager's directions, and cut up and cut down plays, and

patched and pieced, and new faced, and turned them inside out; in short, he was one of the readiest and greatest writers of the day.

He was now on a foraging excursion in quest of something that might be got up for a prodigy. The theatre, it seems, was in desperate condition—nothing but a miracle could save it. He had seen me act Richard the night before and had pitched upon me for that miracle. I had a remarkable bluster in my style and swagger in my gait; I certainly differed from all other heroes of the barn; so the thought struck the agent to bring me out as a theatrical wonder, as the restorer of natural and legitimate acting, as the only one who could understand and act Shakspeare rightly.

When he opened his plan I shrunk from it with becoming modesty, for, well as I thought of myself, I doubted my competency to such an undertaking.

I hinted at my imperfect knowledge of Shakspeare, having played his characters only after

mutilated copies, interlarded with a great deal of my own talk by way of helping memory or heightening the effect.

"So much the better," cried the gentleman with rings on his fingers; "so much the better. New readings, sir!—new readings! Don't study a line—let us have Shakspeare after your own fashion."

"But then my voice was cracked; it could not fill a London theatre."

"So much the better! so much the better! The public is tired of intonation—the *ore rotundo* has had its day. No, sir, your cracked voice is the very thing—spit and splutter, and snap and snarl, and 'play the very dog' about the stage, and you'll be the making of us."

"But then,"—I could not help blushing to the end of my very nose as I said it, but I was determined to be candid;—"but then," added I, "there is one awkward circumstance; I have an unlucky habit—my misfortunes, and the exposures to which one is subjected in country

barns, have obliged me now and then to—to—take a drop of something comfortable—and so—and so——"

"What! you drink?" cried the agent eagerly.

I bowed my head in blushing acknowledgment.

"So much the better! so much the better! The irregularities of genius! A sober fellow is common-place. The public like an actor that drinks.—Give me your hand, sir. You 're the very man to make a dash with."

I still hung back with lingering diffidence, declaring myself unworthy of such praise.

"'Sblood, man," cried he, "no praise at all. You don't imagine *I* think you a wonder; I only want the public to think so. Nothing is so easy as to gull the public, if you only set up a prodigy. Common talent any body can measure by common rule; but a prodigy sets all rule and measurement at defiance."

These words opened my eyes in an instant: we now came to a proper understanding; less

flattering, it is true, to my vanity, but much more satisfactory to my judgment.

It was agreed that I should make my appearance before a London audience, as a dramatic sun just bursting from behind the clouds: one that was to banish all the lesser lights and false fires of the stage. Every precaution was to be taken to possess the public mind at every avenue. The pit was to be packed with sturdy clappers; the newspapers secured by vehement puffers; every theatrical resort to be haunted by hireling talkers. In a word, every engine of theatrical humbug was to be put in action. Where-ever I differed from former actors, it was to be maintained that I was right and they were wrong. If I ranted, it was to be pure passion; if I were vulgar, it was to be pronounced a familiar touch of nature; if I made any queer blunder, it was to be a new reading. If my voice cracked, or I got out in my part, I was only to bounce, and grin, and snarl at the audience, and make any horrible grimace that came

into my head, and my admirers were to call it "a great point," and to fall back and shout and yell with rapture.

"In short," said the gentleman with the quizzing glass, "strike out boldly and bravely: no matter how or what you do, so that it be but odd and strange. If you do but escape pelting the first night, your fortune and the fortune of the theatre is made."

I set off for London, therefore, in company with the kept author, full of new plans and new hopes. I was to be the restorer of Shakspeare and Nature, and the legitimate drama; my very swagger was to be heroic, and my cracked voice the standard of elocution. Alas, sir, my usual luck attended me: before I arrived at the metropolis a rival wonder had appeared, a woman who could dance the slack rope, and run up a cord from the stage to the gallery with fire-works all round her. She was seized on by the manager with avidity. She was the saving of the great national theatre for the season. Nothing was talked of but Madame Saqui's

fire-works and flesh-coloured pantaloons; and Nature, Shakspeare, the legitimate drama, and poor Pillgarlick, were completely left in the lurch.

When Madame Saqui's performance grew stale, other wonders succeeded; horses, and harlequinades, and mummery of all kinds; until another dramatic prodigy was brought forward to play the very game for which I had been intended. I called upon the kept author for an explanation, but he was deeply engaged in writing a melo-drame or a pantomime, and was extremely testy on being interrupted in his studies. However, as the theatre was in some measure pledged to provide for me, the manager acted, according to the usual phrase, "like a man of honour," and I received an appointment in the corps. It had been a turn of a die whether I should be Alexander the Great or Alexander the coppersmith—the latter carried it. I could not be put at the head of the drama, so I was put at the tail of it. In other words, I was enrolled among the number of what are called *useful men;* those who enact soldiers,

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senators, and Banquo's shadowy line. I was perfectly satisfied with my lot; for I have always been a bit of a philosopher. If my situation was not splendid, it at least was secure; and in fact I have seen half a dozen prodigies appear, dazzle, burst like bubbles and pass away, and yet here I am, snug, unenvied and unmolested at the foot of the profession.

No, no, you may smile; but let me tell you, we "useful men" are the only comfortable actors on the stage. We are safe from hisses, and below the hope of applause. We fear not the success of rivals, nor dread the critic's pen. So long as we get the words of our parts, and they are not often many, it is all we care for. We have our own merriment, our own friends, and our own admirers—for every actor has his friends and admirers, from the highest to the lowest. The first-rate actor dines with the noble amateur, and entertains a fashionable table with scraps and songs and theatrical slipslop. The second-rate actors have their second-rate friends and admirers, with whom they likewise

spout tragedy and talk slipslop—and so down even to us; who have our friends and admirers among spruce clerks and aspiring apprentices—who treat us to a dinner now and then, and enjoy at tenth hand the same scraps and songs and slipslop that have been served up by our more fortunate brethren at the tables of the great.

I now, for the first time in my theatrical life, experience what true pleasure is. I have known enough of notoriety to pity the poor devils who are called favourites of the public. I would rather be a kitten in the arms of a spoiled child, to be one moment patted and pampered and the next moment thumped over the head with the spoon. I smile to see our leading actors fretting themselves with envy and jealousy about a trumpery renown, questionable in its quality, and uncertain in its duration. I laugh, too, though of course in my sleeve, at the bustle and importance, and trouble and perplexities of our manager—who is harassing himself to death in the hopeless effort to please every body.

I have found among my fellow subalterns two or three quondam managers, who like myself have wielded the sceptres of country theatres, and we have many a sly joke together at the expense of the manager and the public. Sometimes too, we meet, like deposed and exiled kings, talk over the events of our respective reigns, moralize over a tankard of ale, and laugh at the humbug of the great and little world; which, I take it, is the essence of practical philosophy.

Thus end the anecdotes of Buckthorne and his friends. It grieves me much that I could not procure from him further particulars of his history, and especially of that part of it which passed in town. He had evidently seen much of literary life; and, as he had never risen to eminence in letters, and yet was free from the gall of disappointment, I had hoped to gain some candid intelligence concerning his contemporaries. The testimony of such an honest chronicler would have been particularly valuable

at the present time; when, owing to the extreme fecundity of the press, and the thousand anecdotes, criticisms, and biographical sketches that are daily poured forth concerning public characters, it is extremely difficult to get at any truth concerning them.

He was always, however, excessively reserved and fastidious on this point, at which I very much wondered, authors in general appearing to think each other fair game, and being ready to serve each other up for the amusement of the public.

A few mornings after our hearing the history of the ex-manager, I was surprised by a visit from Buckthorne before I was out of bed. He was dressed for travelling.

"Give me joy! give me joy!" said he, rubbing his hands with the utmost glee, "my great expectations are realised!"

I gazed at him with a look of wonder and inquiry.

"My booby cousin is dead!" cried he; "may he rest in peace! he nearly broke his neck in a

fall from his horse in a fox-chase. By good luck, he lived long enough to make his will. He has made me his heir, partly out of an odd feeling of retributive justice, and partly because, as he says, none of his own family or friends know how to enjoy such an estate. I 'm off to the country, to take possession. I 've done with authorship.—That for the critics!"—said he, snapping his fingers. "Come down to Doubting Castle when I get settled, and, egad, I'll give you a rouse."—So saying, he shook me heartily by the hand, and bounded off in high spirits.

A long time elapsed before I heard from him again. Indeed, it was but lately that I received a letter written in the happiest of moods. He was getting the estate into fine order; every thing went to his wishes; and what was more, he was married to Sacharissa, who it seems had always entertained an ardent though secret attachment for him, which he fortunately discovered just after coming to his estate.

"I find," said he, "you are a little given to

the sin of authorship, which I renounce: if the anecdotes I have given you of my story are of any interest, you may make use of them; but come down to Doubting Castle, and see how we live, and I'll give you my whole London life over a social glass; and a rattling history it shall be about authors and reviewers."

If ever I visit Doubting Castle and get the history he promises, the public shall be sure to hear of it.

PART III.

THE ITALIAN BANDITTI.

THE INN AT TERRACINA.

Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack!

"Here comes the estafette from Naples," said mine host of the inn at Terracina; "bring out the relay."

The estafette came galloping up the road according to custom, brandishing over his head a short-handled whip, with a long, knotted lash, every smack of which made a report like a pistol. He was a tight, square-set young fellow, in the usual uniform. A smart blue coat, ornamented with facings and gold lace, but so short behind as to reach scarcely below his waistband, and cocked up not unlike the tail of a wren; a cocked hat, edged with gold lace; a pair of stiff riding boots; but instead of the

usual leathern breeches, he had a fragment of a pair of drawers, that scarcely furnished an apology for modesty to hide behind.

The estafette galloped up to the door, and jumped from his horse.

"A glass of rosolio, a fresh horse, and a pair of breeches," said he, "and quickly: *per l'amor di Dio*, I am behind my time, and must be off!"

"San Gennaro!" replied the host; "why, where hast thou left thy garment?"

"Among the robbers between this and Fondi."

"What, rob an estafette! I never heard of such folly. What could they hope to get from thee?"

"My leather breeches!" replied the estafette. "They were bran new, and shone like gold, and hit the fancy of the captain."

"Well, these fellows grow worse and worse. To meddle with an estafette! and that merely for the sake of a pair of leather breeches!"

The robbing of a government messenger

seemed to strike the host with more astonishment than any other enormity that had taken place on the road; and, indeed, it was the first time so wanton an outrage had been committed; the robbers generally taking care not to meddle with any thing belonging to government.

The estafette was by this time equipped, for he had not lost an instant in making his preparations while talking. The relay was ready; the rosolio tossed off; he grasped the reins and the stirrup.

"Were there many robbers in the band?" said a handsome, dark young man, stepping forward from the door of the inn.

"As formidable a band as ever I saw," said the estafette, springing into the saddle.

"Are they cruel to travellers?" said a beautiful young Venetian lady, who had been hanging on the gentleman's arm.

"Cruel, signora!" echoed the estafette, giving a glance at the lady as he put spurs to his horse. "Corpo del Bacco! They stiletto all

the men; and, as to the women ——" Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack!—The last words were drowned in the smacking of the whip, and away galloped the estafette along the road to the Pontine marshes.

"Holy Virgin!" ejaculated the fair Venetian; "what will become of us!"

The inn of which we are speaking stands just outside of the walls of Terracina, under a vast precipitous height of rocks, crowned with the ruins of the castle of Theodoric the Goth. The situation of Terracina is remarkable. It is a little, ancient, lazy Italian town, on the frontiers of the Roman territory. There seems to be an idle pause in every thing about the place. The Mediterranean spreads before it—that sea without flux or reflux. The port is without a sail, excepting that once in a while a solitary felucca may be seen disgorging its holy cargo of baccala, the meagre provision for the quaresima, or Lent. The inhabitants are apparently a listless, heedless race, as people of soft, sunny climates are apt to be; but under

this passive, indolent exterior are said to lurk dangerous qualities. They are supposed by many to be little better than the banditti of the neighbouring mountains, and indeed to hold a secret correspondence with them. The solitary watch-towers, erected here and there along the coast, speak of pirates and corsairs that hover about these shores; while the low huts, as stations for soldiers, which dot the distant road, as it winds up through an olive grove, intimate that in the ascent there is danger for the traveller and facility for the bandit. Indeed, it is between this town and Fondi that the road to Naples is most infested by banditti. It has several winding and solitary places, where the robbers are enabled to see the traveller from a distance, from the brows of hills or impending precipices, and to lie in wait for him at lonely and difficult passes.

The Italian robbers are a desperate class of men that have almost formed themselves into an order of society. They wear a kind of uni-

form, or rather costume, which openly designates their profession. This is probably done to diminish its sculking, lawless character, and to give it something of a military air in the eyes of the common people; or, perhaps, to catch by outward show and finery the fancies of the young men of the villages, and thus to gain recruits. Their dresses are often very rich and picturesque. They wear jackets and breeches of bright colours, sometimes gaily embroidered; their breasts are covered with medals and relics; their hats are broad brimmed, with conical crowns, decorated with feathers, or variously coloured ribands; their hair is sometimes gathered in silk nets; they wear a kind of sandal of cloth or leather, bound round the legs with thongs, and extremely flexible, to enable them to scramble with ease and celerity among the mountain precipices; a broad belt of cloth, or a sash of silk net, is stuck full of pistols and stilettos; a carbine is slung at the back, while about them is generally thrown, in

a negligent manner, a great dingy mantle, which serves as a protection in storms, or a bed in their bivouacs among the mountains.

They range over a great extent of wild country, along the chain of Apennines bordering on different states; they know all the difficult passes, the short cuts for retreat, and the impracticable forests of the mountain summits, where no force dare follow them. They are secure of the good-will of the inhabitants of those regions, a poor and semi-barbarous race, whom they never disturb and often enrich. Indeed, they are considered as a sort of illegitimate heroes among the mountain villages, and in certain frontier towns, where they dispose of their plunder. Thus countenanced, and sheltered and secure in the fastnesses of their mountains, the robbers have set the weak police of the Italian states at defiance. It is in vain that their names and descriptions are posted on the doors of country churches, and rewards offered for them alive or dead; the villagers are either too much awed by the terrible instances of vengeance in-

flicted by the Brigands, or have too good an understanding with them to be their betrayers. It is true they are now and then hunted and shot down like beasts of prey by the *gens-d'armes*, their heads put in iron cages and stuck upon posts by the road-side, or their limbs hung up to blacken in the trees near the places where they have committed their atrocities; but these ghastly spectacles only served to make some dreary pass of the road still more dreary, and to dismay the traveller without deterring the bandit.

At the same time that the estafette made the sudden appearance, almost *in cuerpo*, as has been mentioned, the audacity of the robbers had risen to an unparalleled height. They had laid villas under contribution, they had sent messages into country towns, to tradesmen and rich burghers, demanding supplies of money, of clothing, or even of luxuries, with menaces of vengeance in case of refusal; they had their spies and emissaries in every town, village, and inn, along the principal roads, to give them notice of the

movements and quality of travellers. They had plundered carriages, carried people of rank and fortune into the mountains, and obliged them to write for heavy ransoms, and had committed outrages on females who had fallen into their hands.

Such was briefly the state of the robbers, or rather such was the amount of the rumours prevalent concerning them, when the scene took place at the inn of Terracina. The dark handsome young man, and the Venetian lady, incidentally mentioned, had arrived early that afternoon in a private carriage drawn by mules, and attended by a single servant. They had been recently married, were spending the honeymoon in travelling through these delicious countries, and were on their way to visit a rich aunt of the bride's at Naples.

The lady was young, and tender, and timid. The stories she had heard along the road had filled her with apprehension, not more for herself than for her husband; for though she had been married almost a month, she still loved him

almost to idolatry. When she reached Terracina, the rumours of the road had increased to an alarming magnitude; and the sight of two robbers' sculls, grinning in iron cages, on each side of the old gateway of the town, brought her to a pause. Her husband had tried in vain to reassure her, they had lingered all the afternoon at the inn until it was too late to think of starting that evening, and the parting words of the estafette completed her affright.

"Let us return to Rome," said she, putting her arm within her husband's, and drawing towards him as if for protection.—"Let us return to Rome, and give up this visit to Naples."

"And give up the visit to your aunt, too?" said the husband.

"Nay—what is my aunt in comparison with your safety?" said she, looking up tenderly in his face.

There was something in her tone and manner that showed she really was thinking more of her husband's safety at that moment than of her own; and being so recently married, and a

match of pure affection too, it is very possible that she was; at least her husband thought so. Indeed any one who has heard the sweet musical tone of a Venetian voice, and the melting tenderness of a Venetian phrase, and felt the soft witchery of a Venetian eye, would not wonder at the husband's believing whatever they professed. He clasped the white hand that had been laid within his, put his arm round her slender waist, and drawing her fondly to his bosom, "This night, at least," said he, "we will pass at Terracina."

Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack! Another apparition of the road attracted the attention of mine host and his guests. From the direction of the Pontine marshes a carriage drawn by half a dozen horses came driving at a furious rate; the postilions smacking their whips like mad, as is the case when conscious of the greatness or of the munificence of their fare. It was a landaulet, with a servant mounted on the dickey. The compact, highly finished, yet proudly simple construction of the carriage; the quantity of neat,

well-arranged trunks and conveniencies; the loads of box-coats on the dickey; the fresh, burly, bluff-looking face of the master at the window; and the ruddy, round-headed servant, in close-cropped hair, short coat, drab breeches, and long gaiters, all proclaimed at once that this was the equipage of an Englishman.

"Horses to Fondi," said the Englishman, as the landlord came bowing to the carriage door.

"Would not his Eccellenza alight and take some refreshment?"

"No—he did not mean to eat until he got to Fondi."

"But the horses will be some time in getting ready."

"Ah! that's always the way; nothing but delay in this cursed country."

"If his Eccellenza would only walk into the house——"

"No, no, no!—I tell you no!—I want nothing but horses, and as quick as possible. John, see that the horses are got ready, and don't let us be kept here an hour or two. Tell him if

we're delayed over the time, I'll lodge a complaint with the postmaster."

John touched his hat, and set off to obey his master's orders with the taciturn obedience of an English servant.

In the mean time, the Englishman got out of the carriage and walked up and down before the inn with his hands in his pockets, taking no notice of the crowd of idlers who were gazing at him and his equipage. He was tall, stout, and well made; dressed with neatness and precision; wore a travelling cap of the colour of gingerbread; and had rather an unhappy expression about the corners of his mouth; partly from not having yet made his dinner, and partly from not having been able to get on at a greater rate than seven miles an hour: not that he had any other cause for haste than an Englishman's usual hurry to get to the end of a journey; or, to use the regular phrase, "to get on." Perhaps too he was a little sore from having been fleeced at every stage of his journey.

After some time, the servant returned from the stable with a look of some perplexity.

"Are the horses ready, John?"

"No, sir—I never saw such a place. There's no getting any thing done. I think your honour had better step into the house and get something to eat; it will be a long while before we get to Fundy."

"D—n the house—it's a mere trick—I'll not eat any thing, just to spite them," said the Englishman, still more crusty at the prospect of being so long without his dinner.

"They say your honour's very wrong," said John, "to set off at this late hour. The road's full of highwaymen."

"Mere tales to get custom."

"The estafette which passed us was stopped by a whole gang," said John, increasing his emphasis with each additional piece of information.

"I don't believe a word of it."

"They robbed him of his breeches," said

John, giving, at the same time, a hitch to his own waistband.

"All humbug!"

Here the dark handsome young man stepped forward, and addressing the Englishman very politely, in broken English, invited him to partake of a repast he was about to make.

"Thank'ee," said the Englishman, thrusting his hands deeper into his pockets, and casting a slight side glance of suspicion at the young man, as if he thought, from his civility, he must have a design upon his purse.

"We shall be most happy, if you will do us that favour," said the lady in her soft Venetian dialect. There was a sweetness in her accents that was most persuasive. The Englishman cast a look upon her countenance; her beauty was still more eloquent. His features instantly relaxed. He made a polite bow. "With great pleasure, Signora," said he.

In short, the eagerness to "get on" was suddenly slackened; the determination to famish himself as far as Fondi, by way of punishing

the landlord, was abandoned; John chose an apartment in the inn for his master's reception, and preparations were made to remain there until morning.

The carriage was unpacked of such of its contents as were indispensable for the night. There was the usual parade of trunks and writing desks, and portfolios and dressing-boxes, and those other oppressive conveniencies which burthen a comfortable man. The observant loiterers about the inn door, wrapped up in great dirt-coloured cloaks, with only a hawk's eye uncovered, made many remarks to each other on this quantity of luggage that seemed enough for an army. And the domestics of the inn talked with wonder of the splendid dressing-case, with its gold and silver furniture, that was spread out on the toilet-table, and the bag of gold that chinked as it was taken out of the trunk. The strange *milor's* wealth, and the treasures he carried about him, were the talk, that evening, over all Terracina.

The Englishman took some time to make his

ablutions and arrange his dress for table, and, after considerable labour and effort in putting himself at his ease, made his appearance, with stiff white cravat, his clothes free from the least speck of dust, and adjusted with precision. He made a civil bow on entering, in the unprofessing English way, which the fair Venetian, accustomed to the complimentary salutations of the continent, considered extremely cold.

The supper, as it was termed by the Italian, or dinner, as the Englishman called it, was now served; heaven and earth, and the waters under the earth, had been moved to furnish it; for there were birds of the air, and beasts of the field, and fish of the sea. The Englishman's servant, too, had turned the kitchen topsy-turvy in his zeal to cook his master a beefsteak, and made his appearance, loaded with ketchup, and soy, and Cayenne pepper, and Harvey sauce, and a bottle of port wine, from that warehouse the carriage, in which his master seemed desirous of carrying England about the world with him. Indeed the repast was one of those

Italian farragoes which require a little qualifying. The tureen of soup was a black sea, with livers, and limbs, and fragments of all kinds of birds and beasts floating like wrecks about it. A meagre-winged animal, which my host called a delicate chicken, had evidently died of a consumption. The macaroni was smoked. The beefsteak was tough buffalo's flesh. There was what appeared to be a dish of stewed eels, of which the Englishman ate with great relish; but had nearly refunded them when told that they were vipers, caught among the rocks of Terracina, and esteemed a great delicacy.

There is nothing, however, that conquers a traveller's spleen sooner than eating, whatever may be the cookery; and nothing brings him into good humour with his company sooner, than eating together; the Englishman, therefore, had not half finished his repast and his bottle, before he began to think the Venetian a very tolerable fellow for a foreigner, and his wife almost handsome enough to be an Englishwoman.

In the course of the repast, the usual topics

of travellers were discussed, and among others, the reports of robbers, which harassed the mind of the fair Venetian. The landlord and waiter dipped into the conversation with that familiarity permitted on the continent, and served up so many bloody tales as they served up the dishes, that they almost frightened away the poor lady's appetite.

The Englishman, who had a national antipathy to every thing that is technically called "humbug," listened to them all with a certain screw of the mouth, expressive of incredulity. There was the well-known story of the school of Terracina, captured by the robbers; and one of the students coolly massacred, in order to bring the parents to terms for the ransom of the rest. And another, of a gentleman of Rome, who received his son's ear in a letter, with information, that his son would be remitted to him in this way, by instalments, until he paid the required ransom.

The fair Venetian shuddered as she heard these tales: the landlord, like a true narrator

of the terrible, doubled the dose when he saw how it operated. He was just proceeding to relate the misfortunes of a great English lord and his family, when the Englishman, tired of his volubility, interrupted him, and pronounced these accounts to be mere travellers' tales, or the exaggerations of ignorant peasants and designing inn-keepers. The landlord was indignant at the doubt levelled at his stories, and the innuendo levelled at his cloth; he cited, in corroboration, half a dozen tales still more terrible.

"I don't believe a word of them," said the Englishman.

"But the robbers have been tried and executed."

"All a farce!"

"But their heads are stuck up along the road!"

"Old sculls accumulated during a century."

The landlord muttered to himself as he went out at the door, "San Gennaro! quanto sono singolari questi Inglesi!"

A fresh hubbub outside of the inn announced

the arrival of more travellers; and from the variety of voices, or rather of clamours, the clattering of hoofs, the rattling of wheels, and the general uproar both within and without, the arrival seemed to be numerous.

It was, in fact, the procaccio and its convoy; a kind of caravan which sets out on certain days for the transportation of merchandise, with an escort of soldiery to protect it from the robbers. Travellers avail themselves of its protection, and a long file of carriages generally accompany it.

A considerable time elapsed before either landlord or waiter returned, being hurried hither and thither by that tempest of noise and bustle which takes place in an Italian inn on the arrival of any considerable accession of custom. When mine host re-appeared, there was a smile of triumph on his countenance.

"Perhaps," said he, as he cleared the table, "perhaps the signor has not heard of what has happened?"

"What?" said the Englishman, drily.

"Why, the procaccio has brought accounts of fresh exploits of the robbers."

"Pish!"

"There's more news of the English Milor and his family," said the host, exultingly.

"An English lord? What English lord?"

"Milor Popkin."

"Lord Popkins? I never heard of such a title!"

"O sicuro! a great nobleman, who passed through here lately with mi ladi and her daughters. A magnifico, one of the grand counsellors of London, an almanno!"

"Almanno—almanno?—tut—he means alderman."

"Sicuro—Aldermanno Popkin, and the Principessa Popkin, and the Signorine Popkin!" said mine host, triumphantly.

He now put himself into an attitude, and would have launched into a full detail, had he not been thwarted by the Englishman, who seemed determined neither to credit nor indulge

him in his stories, but drily motioned for him to clear away the table.

An Italian tongue, however, is not easily checked: that of mine host continued to wag with increasing volubility as he conveyed the reliques of the repast out of the room; and the last that could be distinguished of his voice, as it died away along the corridor, was the iteration of the favourite word, Popkin—Popkin—Popkin—pop—pop—pop.

The arrival of the procaccio had, indeed, filled the house with stories, as it had with guests. The Englishman and his companions walked after supper up and down the large hall, or common room of the inn, which ran through the centre of the building. It was spacious, and somewhat dirty, with tables placed in various parts, at which groups of travellers were seated; while others strolled about, waiting, in famished impatience, for their evening's meal.

It was a heterogeneous assemblage of people of all ranks and countries, who had arrived in all kind of vehicles. Though distinct knots of

travellers, yet the travelling together, under one common escort, had jumbled them into a certain degree of companionship on the road: besides, on the continent travellers are always familiar, and nothing is more motley than the groups which gather casually together in sociable conversation in the public rooms of inns.

The formidable number, and formidable guard of the procaccio, had prevented any molestation from banditti; but every party of travellers had its tale of wonder, and one carriage vied with another in its budget of assertions and surmises. Fierce, whiskered faces had been seen peering over the rocks; carbines and stilettos gleaming from among the bushes; suspicious-looking fellows, with flapped hats, and scowling eyes, had occasionally reconnoitred a straggling carriage, but had disappeared on seeing the guard.

The fair Venetian listened to all these stories with that avidity with which we always pamper any feeling of alarm; even the Englishman began to feel interested in the common topic, and

desirous of getting more correct information than mere flying reports. Conquering, therefore, that shyness which is prone to keep an Englishman solitary in crowds, he approached one of the talking groups, the oracle of which was a tall, thin Italian, with long aquiline nose, a high forehead, and lively prominent eye, beaming from under a green velvet travelling cap, with gold tassel. He was of Rome, a surgeon by profession, a poet by choice, and something of an improvisatore.

In the present instance, however, he was talking in plain prose, but holding forth with the fluency of one who talks well and likes to exert his talent. A question or two from the Englishman drew copious replies; for an Englishman sociable among strangers is regarded as a phenomenon on the continent, and always treated with attention for the rarity's sake. The improvisatore gave much the same account of the banditti that I have already furnished.

"But why does not the police exert itself and root them out?" demanded the Englishman.

"Because the police is too weak and the ban-

ditti are too strong," replied the other. "To root them out would be a more difficult task than you imagine. They are connected and almost identified with the mountain peasantry and the people of the villages. The numerous bands have an understanding with each other, and with the country round. A gen-d'armes cannot stir without their being aware of it. They have their scouts every where, who lurk about towns, villages, and inns, mingle in every crowd, and pervade every place of resort. I should not be surprised if some one should be supervising us at this moment."

——The fair Venetian looked round fearfully, and turned pale.

Here the improvisatore was interrupted by a lively Neapolitan lawyer.

"By the way," said he, "I recollect a little adventure of a learned doctor, a friend of mine, which happened in this very neighbourhood; not far from the ruins of Theodoric's Castle, which are on the top of those great, rocky heights above the town.

A wish was, of course, expressed to hear the adventure of the doctor by all excepting the improvisatore, who, being fond of talking and of hearing himself talk, and accustomed, moreover, to harangue without interruption, looked rather annoyed at being checked when in full career. The Neapolitan, however, took no notice of his chagrin, but related the following anecdote.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE LITTLE ANTIQUARY.

My friend, the Doctor, was a thorough antiquary; a little rusty, musty old fellow, always groping among ruins. He relished a building as you Englishmen relish a cheese,—the more mouldy and crumbling it was, the more it suited his taste. A shell of an old nameless temple, or the cracked walls of a broken-down amphitheatre, would throw him into raptures; and he took more delight in these crusts and cheese-parings of antiquity than in the best-conditioned modern palaces.

He was a curious collector of coins also, and had just gained an accession of wealth that almost turned his brain. He had picked up, for instance, several Roman Consulars, half a Roman As, two Punics, which had doubtless belonged to

the soldiers of Hannibal, having been found on the very spot where they had encamped among the Apennines. He had, moreover, one Samnite, struck after the Social War, and a Philistis, a queen that never existed; but above all, he valued himself upon a coin, indescribable to any but the initiated in these matters, bearing a cross on one side, and a pegasus on the other, and which, by some antiquarian logic, the little man adduced as an historical document, illustrating the progress of christianity.

All these precious coins he carried about him in a leathern purse, buried deep in a pocket of his little black breeches.

The last maggot he had taken into his brain was to hunt after the ancient cities of the Pelasgi, which are said to exist to this day among the mountains of the Abruzzi; but about which a singular degree of obscurity prevails*. He

* Among the many fond speculations of antiquaries is that of the existence of traces of the ancient Pelasgian cities in the Apennines; and many a wistful eye is cast by the traveller, versed in antiquarian lore, at the richly-wooded mountains of the Abruzzi, as a forbidden fairy-land of re-

had made many discoveries concerning them, and had recorded a great many valuable notes

search. These spots, so beautiful yet so inaccessible, from the rudeness of their inhabitants and the hordes of banditti which infest them, are a region of fable to the learned. Sometimes a wealthy virtuoso, whose purse and whose consequence could command a military escort, has penetrated to some individual point among the mountains; and sometimes a wandering artist or student, under protection of poverty or insignificance, has brought away some vague account, only calculated to give a keener edge to curiosity and conjecture.

By those who maintain the existence of the Pelasgian cities, it is affirmed, that the formation of the different kingdoms in the Peloponnessus gradually caused the expulsion of the Pelasgi from thence; but that their great migration may be dated from the finishing the wall round Acropolis, and that at this period they came into Italy. To these, in the spirit of theory, they would ascribe the introduction of the elegant arts into the country. It is evident, however, that, as barbarians flying before the first dawn of civilization, they could bring little with them superior to the inventions of the Aborigines, and nothing that would have survived to the antiquarian through such a lapse of ages. It would appear more probable, that these cities, improperly termed Pelasgian, were coeval with many that have been discovered. Tho romantic Aricia, built by Hippolytus before the siege of Troy, and the poetic Tibur, Æsculate and Proenes, built by Telegonus after the dispersion of the Greeks. These, lying contiguous to inhabited and cultivated spots, have been discovered. There are others, too, on the ruins

and memorandums on the subject, in a voluminous book, which he always carried about with him, either for the purpose of frequent reference, or through fear lest the precious document should fall into the hands of brother antiquaries. He had, therefore, a large pocket in the skirt of his coat, where he bore about this inestimable tome, banging against his rear as he walked.

Thus heavily laden with the spoils of antiquity, the good little man, during a sojourn at Terracina, mounted one day the rocky cliffs which overhang the town, to visit the castle of Theodoric. He was groping about the ruins towards the hour of sunset, buried in his reflections, his wits no doubt wool-gathering among the Goths and Romans, when he heard footsteps behind him.

of which the later and more civilized Grecian colonists have engrafted themselves, and which have become known by their merits or their medals. But that there are many still undiscovered, imbedded in the Abruzzi, it is the delight of the antiquarians to fancy. Strange that such a virgin soil for research, such an unknown realm of knowledge, should at this day remain in the very centre of hackneyed Italy!

He turned, and beheld five or six young fellows of rough, saucy demeanour, clad in a singular manner, half peasant, half huntsman, with carbines in their hands. Their whole appearance and carriage left him no doubt into what company he had fallen.

The Doctor was a feeble little man, poor in look and poorer in purse. He had but little gold or silver to be robbed of; but then he had his curious ancient coin in his breeches pocket. He had, moreover, certain other valuables; such as an old silver watch, thick as a turnip, with figures on it large enough for a clock; and a set of seals at the end of a steel chain, that dangled half way down to his knees. All these were of precious esteem, being family reliques. He had also a seal ring, a veritable antique intaglio, that covered half his knuckles. It was a Venus, which the old man almost worshipped with the zeal of a voluptuary. But what he most valued was his inestimable collection of hints relative to the Pelasgian cities, which he would gladly have given all the money in his pocket to have

had safe at the bottom of his trunk in Terracina.

However, he plucked up a stout heart, at least as stout a heart as he could, seeing that he was but a puny little man at the best of times. So he wished the hunters a "buon giorno." They returned his salutation, giving the old gentleman a sociable slap on the back that made his heart leap into his throat.

They fell into conversation, and walked for some time together among the heights, the Doctor wishing them all the while at the bottom of the crater of Vesuvius. At length they came to a small osteria on the mountain, where they proposed to enter and have a cup of wine together: the Doctor consented, though he would as soon have been invited to drink hemlock.

One of the gang remained centinel at the door; the others swaggered into the house, stood their guns in a corner of the room, and each drawing a pistol or stiletto out of his belt, laid it upon the table. They now drew benches round the board, called lustily for wine; and hailing

the Doctor as though he had been a boon companion of long standing, insisted upon his sitting down and making merry.

The worthy man complied with forced grimace, but with fear and trembling; sitting uneasily on the edge of his chair; eying ruefully the black-muzzled pistols, and cold, naked stilettos; and supping down heartburn with every drop of liquor. His new comrades, however, pushed the bottle bravely, and plied him vigorously; they sang, they laughed; told excellent stories of their robberies and combats, mingled with many ruffian jokes; and the little Doctor was fain to laugh at all their cut-throat pleasantries, though his heart was dying away at the very bottom of his bosom.

By their own account they were young men from the villages, who had recently taken up this line of life out of the wild caprice of youth. They talked of their murderous exploits as a sportsman talks of his amusements: to shoot down a traveller seemed of little more consequence to them than to shoot a hare. They

spoke with rapture of the glorious roving life they led, free as birds; here to-day, gone to-morrow; ranging the forests, climbing the rocks, scouring the valleys; the world their own wherever they could lay hold of it; full purses—merry companions—pretty women. The little antiquary got fuddled with their talk and their wine, for they did not spare bumpers. He half forgot his fears, his seal ring, and his family watch; even the treatise on the Pelasgian cities, which was warming under him, for a time faded from his memory in the glowing picture which they drew. He declares that he no longer wonders at the prevalence of this robber mania among the mountains; for he felt at the time, that, had he been a young man, and a strong man, and had there been no danger of the gallies in the back-ground, he should have been half tempted himself to turn bandit.

At length the hour of separating arrived. The Doctor was suddenly called to himself and his fears by seeing the robbers resume their weapons. He now quaked for his valuables, and

above all for his antiquarian treatise. He endeavoured, however, to look cool and unconcerned; and drew from out his deep pocket a long, lank, leathern purse, far gone in consumption, at the bottom of which a few coin chinked with the trembling of his hand.

The chief of the party observed his movement, and laying his hand upon the antiquary's shoulder, "Harkee! Signor Dottore!" said he, "we have drunk together as friends and comrades, let us part as such. We understand you; we know who and what you are, for we know who every body is that sleeps at Terracina, or that puts foot upon the road. You are a rich man, but you carry all your wealth in your head: we cannot get at it, and we should not know what to do with it if we could. I see you are uneasy about your ring; but don't worry yourself, it is not worth taking: you think it an antique, but it's a counterfeit—a mere sham."

Here the ire of the antiquary arose: the Doctor forgot himself in his zeal for the character of his ring. Heaven and earth! his

Venus a sham! Had they pronounced the wife of his bosom "no better than she should be," he could not have been more indignant. He fired up in vindication of his intaglio.

"Nay, nay," continued the robber, "we have no time to dispute about it: value it as you please. Come, you 're a brave little old signor—one more cup of wine, and we'll pay the reckoning. No compliments—You shall not pay a grain—You are our guest—I insist upon it. So—now make the best of your way back to Terracina; it 's growing late. Buono viaggio! And harkee! take care how you wander among these mountains,—you may not always fall into such good company."

They shouldered their guns; sprang gaily up the rocks; and the little Doctor hobbled back to Terracina, rejoicing that the robbers had left his watch, his coins, and his treatise, unmolested; but still indignant that they should have pronounced his Venus an impostor.

The improvisatore had shown many symptoms of impatience during this recital. He saw his theme in danger of being taken out of his hands, which, to an able talker, is always a grievance, but to an improvisatore is an absolute calamity: and then for it to be taken away by a Neapolitan was still more vexatious; the inhabitants of the different Italian states having an implacable jealousy of each other in all things, great and small. He took advantage of the first pause of the Neapolitan to catch hold again of the thread of the conversation.

"As I observed before," said he, "the prowlings of the banditti are so extensive, they are so much in league with one another, and so interwoven with various ranks of society—"

"For that matter," said the Neapolitan, "I have heard that your government has had some understanding with those gentry; or, at least, has winked at their misdeeds."

"My government?" said the Roman, impatiently.

"Ay, they say that Cardinal Gonsalvi—"

"Hush!" said the Roman, holding up his finger, and rolling his large eyes about the room.

"Nay, I only repeat what I heard commonly rumoured in Rome," replied the Neapolitan, sturdily. "It was openly said, that the cardinal had been up to the mountains, and had an interview with some of the chiefs. And I have been told, moreover, that while honest people have been kicking their heels in the cardinal's ante-chamber, waiting by the hour for admittance, one of those stiletto-looking fellows has elbowed his way through the crowd, and entered without ceremony into the cardinal's presence."

"I know," observed the improvisatore, "that there have been such reports, and it is not impossible that government may have made use of these men at particular periods: such as at the time of your late abortive revolution, when your carbonari were so busy with their machinations

all over the country. The information which such men could collect, who were familiar, not merely with the recesses and secret places of the mountains, but also with the dark and dangerous recesses of society; who knew every suspicious character, and all his movements and all his lurkings; in a word, who knew all that was plotting in the world of mischief;—the utility of such men as instruments in the hands of government was too obvious to be overlooked; and Cardinal Gonsalvi, as a politic statesman, may, perhaps, have made use of them. Besides, he knew that, with all their atrocities, the robbers were always respectful towards the church, and devout in their religion."

"Religion! religion?" echoed the Englishman.

"Yes, religion," repeated the Roman. "They have each their patron saint. They will cross themselves and say their prayers, whenever, in their mountain haunts, they hear the matin or the ave-maria bells sounding from the valleys; and

will often descend from their retreats, and run imminent risks to visit some favourite shrine. I recollect an instance in point.

"I was one evening in the village of Frescati, which stands on the beautiful brow of hills rising from the Campagna, just below the Abruzzi mountains. The people, as is usual in fine evenings in our Italian towns and villages, were recreating themselves in the open air, and chatting in groups in the public square. While I was conversing with a knot of friends, I noticed a tall fellow, wrapped in a great mantle, passing across the square, but sculking along in the dusk, as if anxious to avoid observation. The people drew back as he passed. It was whispered to me that he was a notorious bandit."

"But why was he not immediately seized?" said the Englishman.

"Because it was nobody's business; because nobody wished to incur the vengeance of his comrades; because there were not sufficient gens-d'armes near to ensure security against the

numbers of desperadoes he might have at hand; because the gens-d'armes might not have received particular instructions with respect to him, and might not feel disposed to engage in a hazardous conflict without compulsion. In short, I might give you a thousand reasons rising out of the state of our government and manners, not one of which after all might appear satisfactory."

The Englishman shrugged his shoulders with an air of contempt.

"I have been told," added the Roman, rather quickly, "that even in your metropolis of London, notorious thieves, well known to the police as such, walk the streets at noonday in search of their prey, and are not molested unless caught in the very act of robbery."

The Englishman gave another shrug, but with a different expression.

"Well, sir, I fixed my eye on this daring wolf, thus prowling through the fold, and saw him enter a church. I was curious to witness his devotion. You know our spacious, magnificent churches. The one in which he entered

was vast, and shrowded in the dusk of evening. At the extremity of the long aisles a couple of tapers feebly glimmered on the grand altar. In one of the side chapels was a votive candle placed before the image of a saint. Before this image the robber had prostrated himself. His mantle partly falling off from his shoulders as he knelt, revealed a form of Herculean strength: a stiletto and pistol glittered in his belt; and the light falling on his countenance, showed features not unhandsome, but strongly and fiercely characterised. As he prayed, he became vehemently agitated; his lips quivered; sighs and murmurs, almost groans burst from him; he beat his breast with violence, then clasped his hands and wrung them convulsively as he extended them towards the image. Never had I seen such a terrific picture of remorse. I felt fearful of being discovered watching him, and withdrew. Shortly afterwards I saw him issue from the church wrapped in his mantle. He re-crossed the square, and no doubt returned to the mountains with a dis-

burthened conscience, ready to incur a fresh arrear of crime."

Here the Neapolitan was about to get hold of the conversation, and had just preluded with the ominous remark, "That puts me in mind of a circumstance," when the improvisatore, too adroit to suffer himself to be again superseded, went on, pretending not to hear the interruption.

"Among the many circumstances connected with the banditti which serve to render the traveller uneasy and insecure, is the understanding which they sometimes have with innkeepers. Many an isolated inn among the lonely parts of the Roman territories, and especially about the mountains, are of a dangerous and perfidious character. They are places where the banditti gather information, and where the unwary traveller, remote from hearing or assistance, is betrayed to the midnight dagger. The robberies committed at such inns are often accompanied by the most atrocious murders; for it is only by the complete extermination of their victims that

the assassins can escape detection. I recollect an adventure," added he, "which occurred at one of these solitary mountain inns, which, as you all seem in a mood for robber anecdotes, may not be uninteresting."

Having secured the attention and awakened the curiosity of the by-standers, he paused for a moment, rolled up his large eyes as improvisatori are apt to do when they would recollect an impromptu, and then related with great dramatic effect the following story, which had, doubtless, been well prepared and digested beforehand.

THE BELATED TRAVELLERS.

It was late one evening that a carriage, drawn by mules, slowly toiled its way up one of the passes of the Apennines. It was through one of the wildest defiles, where a hamlet occurred only at distant intervals, perched on the summit of some rocky height, or the white towers of a convent peeped out from among the thick mountain foliage. The carriage was of ancient and ponderous construction. Its faded embellishments spoke of former splendor, but its crazy springs and axletrees creaked out the tale of present decline. Within was seated a tall, thin old gentleman, in a kind of military travelling dress, and a foraging cap trimmed with fur, though the gray locks which stole from under it hinted that his fighting days were over.

Beside him was a pale, beautiful girl of eighteen, dressed in something of a northern or Polish costume. One servant was seated in front, a rusty, crusty-looking fellow, with a scar across his face; an orange-tawny *schnur-bart*, or pair of mustachios, bristling from under his nose, and altogether the air of an old soldier.

It was, in fact, the equipage of a Polish nobleman; a wreck of one of those princely families which had lived with almost oriental magnificence, but had been broken down and impoverished by the disasters of Poland. The Count, like many other generous spirits, had been found guilty of the crime of patriotism, and was, in a manner, an exile from his country. He had resided for some time in the first cities of Italy for the education of his daughter, in whom all his cares and pleasures were now centred. He had taken her into society, where her beauty and her accomplishments had gained her many admirers; and had she not been the daughter of a poor broken-down Polish nobleman, it is more than probable that many would have contended

for her hand. Suddenly, however, her health had become delicate and drooping; her gaiety fled with the roses of her cheek, and she sunk into silence and debility. The old Count saw the change with the solicitude of a parent. "We must try a change of air and scene," said he; and in a few days the old family carriage was rumbling among the Apennines.

Their only attendant was the veteran Caspar, who had been born in the family, and grown rusty in its service. He had followed his master in all his fortunes; had fought by his side; had stood over him when fallen in battle; and had received, in his defence, the sabre-cut which added such grimness to his countenance. He was now his valet, his steward, his butler, his factotum. The only being that rivalled his master in his affections was his youthful mistress; she had grown up under his eye. He had led her by the hand when she was a child, and he now looked upon her with the fondness of a parent; nay, he even took the freedom of a parent in giving his blunt opinion on all mat-

ters which he thought were for her good; and felt a parent's vanity in seeing her gazed at and admired.

The evening was thickening: they had been for some time passing through narrow gorges of the mountains, along the edge of a tumbling stream. The scenery was lonely and savage. The rocks often beetled over the road, with flocks of white goats browsing on their brinks, and gazing down upon the travellers. They had between two and three leagues yet to go before they could reach any village; yet the muleteer, Pietro, a tippling old fellow, who had refreshed himself at the last halting-place with a more than ordinary quantity of wine, sat singing and talking alternately to his mules, and suffering them to lag on at a snail's pace, in spite of the frequent entreaties of the Count and maledictions of Caspar.

The clouds began to roll in heavy masses among the mountains, shrouding their summits from the view. The air of these heights, too, was damp and chilly. The Count's solicitude

on his daughter's account overcame his usual patience. He leaned from the carriage, and called to old Pietro in an angry tone.

"Forward!" said he. "It will be midnight before we arrive at our inn."

"Yonder it is, Signor," said the muleteer.

"Where?" demanded the Count.

"Yonder," said Pietro, pointing to a desolate pile of building about a quarter of a league distant.

"That the place?—why, it looks more like a ruin than an inn. I thought we were to put up for the night at a comfortable village."

Here Pietro uttered a string of piteous exclamations and ejaculations, such as are ever at the tip of the tongue of a delinquent muleteer. "Such roads! and such mountains! and then his poor animals were way-worn, and leg-weary; they would fall lame; they would never be able to reach the village. And then what could his Eccellenza wish for better than the inn; a perfect castello—a palazza—and such people!—and such a larder!—and such beds!—His Ec-

cellenza might fare as sumptuously and sleep as soundly there as a prince!"

The Count was easily persuaded, for he was anxious to get his daughter out of the night air; so in a little while the old carriage rattled and jingled into the great gateway of the inn.

The building did certainly in some measure answer to the muleteer's description. It was large enough for either castle or palazza; built in a strong, but simple and almost rude style; with a great quantity of waste room. It had, in fact, been, in former times, a hunting-seat for one of the Italian princes. There was space enough within its walls and in its outbuildings to have accommodated a little army.

A scanty household seemed now to people this dreary mansion. The faces that presented themselves on the arrival of the travellers were begrimed with dirt, and scowling in their expression. They all knew old Pietro, however, and gave him a welcome as he entered, singing and talking, and almost whooping, into the gateway.

The hostess of the inn waited herself on the

Count and his daughter, to show them the apartments. They were conducted through a long gloomy corridor, and then through a suite of chambers opening into each other, with lofty ceilings, and great beams extending across them. Every thing, however, had a wretched, squalid look. The walls were damp and bare, excepting that here and there hung some great painting, large enough for a chapel, and blackened out of all distinctness.

They chose two bed-rooms, one within another; the inner one for the daughter. The bedsteads were massive and mishapen; but on examining the beds, so vaunted by old Pietro, they found them stuffed with fibres of hemp, knotted in great lumps. The Count shrugged his shoulders, but there was no choice left.

The chilliness of the apartments crept to their bones; and they were glad to return to a common chamber, or kind of hall, where there was a fire burning in a huge cavern, miscalled a chimney. A quantity of green wood had just been thrown on, which puffed out volumes of

smoke. The room corresponded to the rest of the mansion. The floor was paved and dirty. A great oaken table stood in the centre, immoveable from its size and weight.

The only thing that contradicted this prevalent air of indigence was the dress of the hostess. She was a slattern of course; yet her garments, though dirty and negligent, were of costly materials. She wore several rings of great value on her fingers, and jewels in her ears, and round her neck was a string of large pearls, to which was attached a sparkling crucifix. She had the remains of beauty; yet there was something in the expression of her countenance that inspired the young lady with singular aversion. She was officious and obsequious in her attentions, and both the Count and his daughter were relieved when she consigned them to the care of a dark, sullen-looking servant-maid, and went off to superintend the supper.

Caspar was indignant at the muleteer for having, either through negligence or design, subjected his master and mistress to such quar-

ters; and vowed by his mustachios to have revenge on the old varlet the moment they were safe out from among the mountains. He kept up a continual quarrel with the sulky servant-maid, which only served to increase the sinister expression with which she regarded the travellers, from under her strong dark eyebrows.

As to the Count, he was a good-humoured, passive traveller. Perhaps real misfortunes had subdued his spirit, and rendered him tolerant of many of those petty evils which make prosperous men miserable. He drew a large, broken armchair to the fire-side for his daughter, and another for himself, and seizing an enormous pair of tongs, endeavoured to re-arrange the wood so as to produce a blaze. His efforts, however, were only repaid by thicker puffs of smoke, which almost overcame the good gentleman's patience. He would draw back, cast a look upon his delicate daughter, then upon the cheerless, squalid apartment, and shrugging his shoulders, would give a fresh stir to the fire.

Of all the miseries of a comfortless inn, however, there is none greater than sulky attendance: the good Count for some time bore the smoke in silence, rather than address himself to the scowling servant-maid. At length he was compelled to beg for drier firewood. The woman retired muttering. On re-entering the room hastily, with an armful of faggots, her foot slipped; she fell, and striking her head against the corner of a chair, cut her temple severely. The blow stunned her for a time, and the wound bled profusely. When she recovered, she found the Count's daughter administering to her wound, and binding it up with her own handkerchief. It was such an attention as any woman of ordinary feeling would have yielded; but perhaps there was something in the appearance of the lovely being who bent over her, or in the tones of her voice, that touched the heart of the woman, unused to be ministered to by such hands. Certain it is, she was strongly affected. She caught the delicate hand of the Polonaise, and pressed it fervently to her lips:

"May San Francesco watch over you, Signora!" exclaimed she.

A new arrival broke the stillness of the inn. It was a Spanish princess with a numerous retinue. The court-yard was in an uproar; the house in a bustle; the landlady hurried to attend such distinguished guests; and the poor Count and his daughter, and their supper, were for the moment forgotten. The veteran Caspar muttered Polish maledictions enough to agonize an Italian ear; but it was impossible to convince the hostess of the superiority of his old master and young mistress to the whole nobility of Spain.

The noise of the arrival had attracted the daughter to the window just as the new-comers had alighted. A young cavalier sprang out of the carriage, and handed out the princess. The latter was a little shrivelled old lady, with a face of parchment, and a sparkling black eye; she was richly and gaily dressed, and walked with the assistance of a gold-headed cane as high as herself. The young man was tall and elegantly

formed. The Count's daughter shrunk back at sight of him, though the deep frame of the window screened her from observation. She gave a heavy sigh as she closed the casement. What that sigh meant I cannot say. Perhaps it was at the contrast between the splendid equipage of the princess, and the crazy, rheumatic-looking old vehicle of her father, which stood hard by. Whatever might be the reason, the young lady closed the casement with a sigh. She returned to her chair;—a slight shivering passed over her delicate frame; she leaned her elbow on the arm of the chair; rested her pale cheek in the palm of her hand, and looked mournfully into the fire.

The Count thought she appeared paler than usual.—

"Does any thing ail thee, my child?" said he.

"Nothing, dear father!" replied she, laying her hand within his, and looking up smiling in his face; but as she said so, a treacherous tear rose suddenly to her eye, and she turned away her head.

"The air of the window has chilled thee," said the Count, fondly, "but a good night's rest will make all well again."

The supper-table was at length laid, and the supper about to be served, when the hostess appeared, with her usual obsequiousness, apologizing for showing in the new-comers; but the night air was cold, and there was no other chamber in the inn with a fire in it.—She had scarcely made the apology when the Princess entered, leaning on the arm of the elegant young man.

The Count immediately recognized her for a lady whom he had met frequently in society both at Rome and Naples; and at whose conversaziones, in fact, he had constantly been invited. The cavalier, too, was her nephew and heir, who had been greatly admired in the gay circles both for his merits and prospects, and who had once been on a visit at the same time with his daughter and himself at the villa of a nobleman near Naples. Report had recently affianced him to a rich Spanish heiress.

The meeting was agreeable to both the Count

and the Princess. The former was a gentleman of the old school, courteous in the extreme; the Princess had been a belle in her youth, and a woman of fashion all her life, and liked to be attended to.

The young man approached the daughter, and began something of a complimentary observation; but his manner was embarrassed, and his compliment ended in an indistinct murmur, while the daughter bowed without looking up, moved her lips without articulating a word, and sunk again into her chair, where she sat gazing into the fire, with a thousand varying expressions passing over her countenance.

This singular greeting of the young people was not perceived by the old ones, who were occupied at the time with their own courteous salutations. It was arranged that they should sup together; and as the Princess travelled with her own cook, a very tolerable supper soon smoked upon the board; this, too, was assisted by choice wines, and liqueurs, and delicate confitures brought from one of her carriages; for

she was a veteran epicure, and curious in her relish for the good things of this world. She was, in fact, a vivacious little old lady, who mingled the woman of dissipation with the devotee. She was actually on her way to Loretto to expiate a long life of gallantries and peccadilloes by a rich offering at the holy shrine. She was, to be sure, rather a luxurious penitent, and a contrast to the primitive pilgrims, with scrip, and staff, and cockleshell; but then it would be unreasonable to expect such self-denial from people of fashion; and there was not a doubt of the ample efficacy of the rich crucifixes, and golden vessels, and jewelled ornaments, which she was bearing to the treasury of the blessed Virgin.

The Princess and the Count chatted much during supper about the scenes and society in which they had mingled, and did not notice that they had all the conversation to themselves: the young people were silent and constrained. The daughter ate nothing, in spite of the politeness of the Princess, who continually pressed her

to taste of one or other of the delicacies. The Count shook his head:

"She is not well this evening," said he. "I thought she would have fainted just now as she was looking out of the window at your carriage on its arrival."

A crimson glow flushed to the very temples of the daughter; but she leaned over her plate, and her tresses cast a shade over her countenance.

When supper was over, they drew their chairs about the great fireplace. The flame and smoke had subsided, and a heap of glowing embers diffused a grateful warmth. A guitar, which had been brought from the Count's carriage, leaned against the wall; the Princess perceived it: "Can we not have a little music before parting for the night?" demanded she.

The Count was proud of his daughter's accomplishment, and joined in the request. The young man made an effort of politeness, and taking up the guitar presented it, though in an embarrassed manner, to the fair musician. She would have declined it, but was too much con-

fused to do so; indeed, she was so nervous and agitated, that she dared not trust her voice to make an excuse. She touched the instrument with a faltering hand, and, after preluding a little, accompanied herself in several Polish airs. Her father's eyes glistened as he sat gazing on her. Even the crusty Gaspar lingered in the room, partly through a fondness for the music of his native country, but chiefly through his pride in the musician. Indeed, the melody of the voice, and the delicacy of the touch, were enough to have charmed more fastidious ears. The little Princess nodded her head and tapped her hand to the music, though exceedingly out of time; while the nephew sat buried in profound contemplation of a black picture on the opposite wall.

"And now," said the Count, patting her cheek fondly, "one more favour. Let the princess hear that little Spanish air you were so fond of. You can't think," added he, "what a proficiency she made in your language; though she has been a sad girl and neglected it of late."

The colour flushed the pale cheek of the daughter; she hesitated, murmured something; but with sudden effort collected herself, struck the guitar boldly, and began. It was a Spanish romance, with something of love and melancholy in it. She gave the first stanza with great expression, for the tremulous, melting tones of her voice went to the heart; but her articulation failed, her lip quivered, the song died away, and she burst into tears.

The Count folded her tenderly in his arms. "Thou art not well, my child," said he, "and I am tasking thee cruelly. Retire to thy chamber, and God bless thee!" She bowed to the company without raising her eyes, and glided out of the room.

The Count shook his head as the door closed. "Something is the matter with that child," said he, "which I cannot divine. She has lost all health and spirits lately. She was always a tender flower, and I had much pains to rear her. Excuse a father's foolishness," continued he, "but

I have seen much trouble in my family; and this poor girl is all that is now left to me; and she used to be so lively—"

"May be she 's in love!" said the little Princess, with a shrewd nod of the head.

"Impossible!" replied the good Count artlessly. "She has never mentioned a word of such a thing to me."

How little did the worthy gentleman dream of the thousand cares, and griefs, and mighty love concerns which agitate a virgin heart, and which a timid girl scarce breathes unto herself.

The nephew of the Princess rose abruptly and walked about the room.

When she found herself alone in her chamber, the feelings of the young lady, so long restrained, broke forth with violence. She opened the casement, that the cool air might blow upon her throbbing temples. Perhaps there was some little pride or pique mingled with her emotions; though her gentle nature did not seem calculated to harbour any such angry inmate.

"He saw me weep!" said she, with a sudden mantling of the cheek, and a swelling of the throat,—"but no matter!—no matter!"

And so saying, she threw her white arms across the window-frame, buried her face in them, and abandoned herself to an agony of tears. She remained lost in a reverie, until the sound of her father's and Caspar's voices in the adjoining room gave token that the party had retired for the night. The lights gleaming from window to window, showed that they were conducting the Princess to her apartments, which was in the opposite wing of the inn; and she distinctly saw the figure of the nephew as he passed one of the casements.

She heaved a deep heart-drawn sigh, and was about to close the lattice, when her attention was caught by words spoken below her window by two persons who had just turned an angle of the building.

"But what will become of the poor young lady?" said a voice, which she recognized for that of the servant-woman.

"Pooh! she must take her chance," was the reply from old Pietro.

"But cannot she be spared?" asked the other entreatingly; "she's so kind-hearted!"

"Cospetto! what has got into thee?" replied the other petulantly: "would you mar the whole business for the sake of a silly girl?" By this time they had got so far from the window that the Polonaise could hear nothing further.

There was something in this fragment of conversation that was calculated to alarm. Did it relate to herself?—and if so, what was this impending danger from which it was entreated that she might be spared? She was several times on the point of tapping at her father's door, to tell him what she had heard; but she might have been mistaken; she might have heard indistinctly; the conversation might have alluded to some one else; at any rate it was too indefinite to lead to any conclusion. While in this state of irresolution, she was startled by a low knocking against the wainscot in a remote part of her gloomy chamber. On holding up the light, she

beheld a small door there, which she had not before remarked. It was bolted on the inside. She advanced, and demanded who knocked, and was answered in the voice of the female domestic. On opening the door, the woman stood before it pale and agitated. She entered softly, laying her finger on her lips in sign of caution and secrecy.

"Fly!" said she: "leave this house instantly, or you are lost!"

The young lady, trembling with alarm, demanded an explanation.

"I have no time," replied the woman, "I dare not—I shall be missed if I linger here—but fly instantly, or you are lost."

"And leave my father?"

"Where is he?"

"In the adjoining chamber."

"Call him, then, but lose no time."

The young lady knocked at her father's door. He was not yet retired to bed. She hurried into his room, and told him of the fearful warning

she had received. The Count returned with her into her chamber, followed by Caspar. His questions soon drew the truth out of the embarrassed answers of the woman. The inn was beset by robbers. They were to be introduced after midnight, when the attendants of the Princess and the rest of the travellers were sleeping, and would be an easy prey.

"But we can barricado the inn, we can defend ourselves," said the Count.

"What! when the people of the inn were in league with the banditti?"

"How then are we to escape? Can we not order out the carriage and depart?"

"San Francesco! for what? To give the alarm that the plot is discovered? That would make the robbers desperate, and bring them on you at once. They have had notice of the rich booty in the inn, and will not easily let it escape them."

"But how else are we to get off?"

"There is a horse behind the inn," said the

woman, "from which the man has just dismounted who has been to summon the aid of a part of the band who were at a distance."

"One horse! and there are three of us!" said the Count.

"And the Spanish Princess!" cried the daughter anxiously—"How can she be extricated from the danger?"

"Diavolo! what is she to me?" said the woman in sudden passion. "It is *you* I come to save, and you will betray me, and we shall all be lost! Hark!" continued she, "I am called—I shall be discovered—one word more. This door leads by a staircase to the court-yard. Under the shed, in the rear of the yard, is a small door leading out to the fields. You will find a horse there; mount it; make a circuit under the shadow of a ridge of rocks that you will see; proceed cautiously and quietly until you cross a brook, and find yourself on the road just where there are three white crosses nailed against a tree; then put your horse to his speed, and make the best of your way to the village—but recollect,

my life is in your hands—say nothing of what you have heard or seen, whatever may happen at this inn."

The woman hurried away. A short and agitated consultation took place between the Count, his daughter, and the veteran Caspar. The young lady seemed to have lost all apprehension for herself in her solicitude for the safety of the Princess. "To fly in selfish silence, and leave her to be massacred!"—A shuddering seized her at the very thought. The gallantry of the Count, too, revolted at the idea. He could not consent to turn his back upon a party of helpless travellers, and leave them in ignorance of the danger which hung over them.

"But what is to become of the young lady," said Caspar, "if the alarm is given, and the inn thrown in a tumult? What may happen to her in a chance-medley affray?"

Here the feelings of the father were roused: he looked upon his lovely, helpless child, and trembled at the chance of her falling into the hands of ruffians.

The daughter, however, thought nothing of herself. "The Princess! the Princess!—only let the Princess know her danger."—She was willing to share it with her.

At length Caspar interfered with the zeal of a faithful old servant. No time was to be lost—the first thing was to get the young lady out of danger. "Mount the horse," said he to the Count, "take her behind you, and fly! Make for the village, rouse the inhabitants, and send assistance. Leave me here to give the alarm to the Princess and her people. I am an old soldier, and I think we shall be able to stand siege until you send us aid."

The daughter would again have insisted on staying with the Princess—

"For what?" said old Caspar, bluntly, "You could do no good—You would be in the way—We should have to take care of you instead of ourselves."

There was no answering these objections: the Count seized his pistols, and taking his daughter under his arm, moved towards the staircase. The

young lady paused, stepped back, and said, faltering with agitation—"There is a young cavalier with the Princess—her nephew—perhaps he may—"

"I understand you, Mademoiselle," replied old Caspar with a significant nod; "not a hair of his head shall suffer harm if I can help it!"

The young lady blushed deeper than ever: she had not anticipated being so thoroughly understood by the blunt old servant.

"That is not what I mean," said she, hesitating. She would have added something, or made some explanation, but the moments were precious, and her father hurried her away.

They found their way through the court-yard to the small postern gate, where the horse stood, fastened to a ring in the wall. The Count mounted, took his daughter behind him, and they proceeded as quietly as possible in the direction which the woman had pointed out. Many a fearful and an anxious look did the daughter cast back upon the gloomy pile of building: the lights which had feebly twinkled through the

dusty casements were one by one disappearing, a sign that the house was gradually sinking to repose; and she trembled with impatience, lest succour should not arrive until that repose had been fatally interrupted.

They passed silently and safely along the skirts of the rocks, protected from observation by their overhanging shadows. They crossed the brook, and reached the place where three white crosses nailed against a tree told of some murder that had been committed there. Just as they had reached this ill-omened spot they beheld several men in the gloom coming down a craggy defile among the rocks.

"Who goes there?" exclaimed a voice. The Count put spurs to his horse, but one of the men sprang forward and seized the bridle. The horse became restive, started back, and reared, and had not the young lady clung to her father, she would have been thrown off. The Count leaned forward, put a pistol to the very head of the ruffian, and fired. The latter fell dead. The horse sprang forward. Two or three shots

were fired which whistled by the fugitives, but only served to augment their speed. They reached the village in safety.

The whole place was soon aroused: but such was the awe in which the banditti were held, that the inhabitants shrunk at the idea of encountering them. A desperate band had for some time infested that pass through the mountains, and the inn had long been suspected of being one of those horrible places where the unsuspicious wayfarer is entrapped and silently disposed of. The rich ornaments worn by the slattern hostess of the inn had excited heavy suspicions. Several instances had occurred of small parties of travellers disappearing mysteriously on that road, who it was supposed, at first, had been carried off by the robbers for the sake of ransom, but who had never been heard of more. Such were the tales buzzed in the ears of the Count by the villagers as he endeavoured to rouse them to the rescue of the princess and her train from their perilous situation. The daughter seconded the exertions of

her father with all the eloquence of prayers, and tears, and beauty. Every moment that elapsed increased her anxiety until it became agonizing. Fortunately, there was a body of gens-d'armes resting at the village. A number of the young villagers volunteered to accompany them, and the little army was put in motion. The Count having deposited his daughter in a place of safety, was too much of the old soldier not to hasten to the scene of danger. It would be difficult to paint the anxious agitation of the young lady while awaiting the result.

The party arrived at the inn just in time. The robbers, finding their plans discovered, and the travellers prepared for their reception, had become open and furious in their attack. The Princess's party had barricadoed themselves in one suite of apartments, and repulsed the robbers from the doors and windows. Caspar had shown the generalship of a veteran, and the nephew of the Princess the dashing valour of a young soldier. Their ammunition, however,

was nearly exhausted, and they would have found it difficult to hold out much longer, when a discharge from the musketry of the gens-d'armes gave them the joyful tidings of succour.

A fierce fight ensued, for part of the robbers were surprised in the inn, and had to stand siege in their turn; while their comrades made desperate attempts to relieve them from under cover of the neighbouring rocks and thickets.

I cannot pretend to give a minute account of the fight, as I have heard it related in a variety of ways. Suffice it to say, the robbers were defeated; several of them killed, and several taken prisoners; which last, together with the people of the inn, were either executed or sent to the galleys.

I picked up these particulars in the course of a journey which I made some time after the event had taken place. I passed by the very inn. It was then dismantled, excepting one wing, in which a body of gens-d'armes was stationed. They pointed out to me the shot-holes in the window-frames, the walls, and the pan-

nels of the doors. There were a number of withered limbs dangling from the branches of a neighbouring tree, and blackening in the air, which I was told were the limbs of the robbers who had been slain, and the culprits who had been executed. The whole place had a dismal, wild, forlorn look.

"Were any of the Princess's party killed?" inquired the Englishman.

"As far as I can recollect, there were two or three."

"Not the nephew, I trust?" said the fair Venetian.

"Oh no: he hastened with the Count to relieve the anxiety of the daughter by the assurances of victory. The young lady had been sustained throughout the interval of suspense by the very intensity of her feelings. The moment she saw her father returning in safety, accompanied by the nephew of the Princess, she uttered a cry of rapture and fainted. Happily, however, she soon recovered, and what is more,

was married shortly after to the young cavalier, and the whole party accompanied the old Princess in her pilgrimage to Loretto, where her votive offerings may still be seen in the treasury of the Santa Casa."

It would be tedious to follow the devious course of the conversation as it wound through a maze of stories of the kind, until it was taken up by two other travellers who had come under convoy of the Procaccio: Mr. Hobbs and Mr. Dobbs, a linendraper and a greengrocer, just returning from a hasty tour in Greece and the Holy Land. They were full of the story of Alderman Popkins. They were astonished that the robbers should dare to molest a man of his importance on 'Change, he being an eminent dry-salter of Throgmorton-street, and a magistrate to boot.

In fact, the story of the Popkins family was but too true. It was attested by too many pre-

sent to be for a moment doubted; and from the contradictory and concordant testimony of half a score, all eager to relate it, and all talking at the same time, the Englishman was enabled to gather the following particulars.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE POPKINS FAMILY.

It was but a few days before, that the carriage of Alderman Popkins had driven up to the inn of Terracina. Those who have seen an English family carriage on the continent must have remarked the sensation it produces. It is an epitome of England; a little morsel of the old island rolling about the world. Every thing about it compact, snug, finished, and fitting. The wheels, turning on patent axles without rattling; the body, hanging so well on its springs, yielding to every motion, yet protecting from every shock; the ruddy faces gaping from the windows—sometimes of a portly old citizen, sometimes of a voluminous dowager,

and sometimes of a fine fresh hoyden just from boarding-school. And then the dickey's loaded with well-dressed servants, beef-fed and bluff; looking down from their heights with contempt on all the world around; profoundly ignorant of the country and the people, and devoutly certain that every thing not English must be wrong.

Such was the carriage of Alderman Popkins as it made its appearance at Terracina. The courier who had preceded it to order horses, and who was a Neapolitan, had given a magnificent account of the riches and greatness of his master, blundering with an Italian's splendour of imagination about the alderman's titles and dignities: the host had added his usual share of exaggeration; so that by the time the alderman drove up to the door, he was a Milor—Magnifico—Principe—the Lord knows what!

The alderman was advised to take an escort to Fondi and Itri, but he refused. It was as much as a man's life was worth, he said, to stop him on the king's highway: he would com-

plain of it to the ambassador at Naples; he would make a national affair of it. The Principessa Popkins, a fresh, motherly dame, seemed perfectly secure in the protection of her husband, so omnipotent a man in the city. The Signorine Popkins, two fine bouncing girls, looked to their brother Tom, who had taken lessons in boxing: and as to the dandy himself, he swore no scaramouch of an Italian robber would dare to meddle with an Englishman. The landlord shrugged his shoulders, and turned out the palms of his hands with a true Italian grimace, and the carriage of Milor Popkins rolled on.

They passed through several very suspicious places without any molestation. The Miss Popkins', who were very romantic, and had learnt to draw in water-colours, were enchanted with the savage scenery around; it was so like what they had read in Mrs. Radcliffe's romances; they should like of all things to make sketches. At length the carriage arrived at a place where the road wound up a long hill. Mrs. Popkins

had sunk into a sleep; the young ladies were lost in the "Loves of the Angels;" and the dandy was hectoring the postilions from the coach-box. The alderman got out, as he said, to stretch his legs up the hill. It was a long, winding ascent, and obliged him every now and then to stop and blow and wipe his forehead, with many a pish! and phew! being rather pursy and short of wind. As the carriage, however, was far behind him, and moved slowly under the weight of so many well-stuffed trunks and well-stuffed travellers, he had plenty of time to walk at leisure.

On a jutting point of rock that over-hung the road, nearly at the summit of the hill, just where the route began again to descend, he saw a solitary man seated, who appeared to be tending goats. Alderman Popkins was one of your shrewd travellers who always like to be picking up small information along the road; so he thought he'd just scramble up to the honest man, and have a little talk with him by way of learning the news and getting a lesson in Italian.

As he drew near to the peasant, he did not half like his looks. He was partly reclining on the rocks, wrapped in the usual long mantle, which, with his slouched hat, only left a part of a swarthy visage, with a keen black eye, a beetle brow, and a fierce moustache to be seen. He had whistled several times to his dog, which was roving about the side of the hill. As the alderman approached, he rose and greeted him. When standing erect, he seemed almost gigantic, at least in the eyes of Alderman Popkins, who, however, being a short man, might be deceived.

The latter would gladly now have been back in the carriage, or even on 'Change in London; for he was by no means well pleased with his company. However, he determined to put the best face on matters, and was beginning a conversation about the state of the weather, the baddishness of the crops, and the price of goats in that part of the country, when he heard a violent screaming. He ran to the edge of the rock, and, looking over, beheld his carriage sur-

rounded by robbers. One held down the fat footman, another had the dandy by his starched cravat, with a pistol to his head; one was rummaging a portmanteau, another rummaging the Principessa's pockets; while the two Miss Popkins' were screaming from each window of the carriage, and their waiting-maid squalling from the dickey.

Alderman Popkins felt all the ire of the parent and the magistrate roused within him. He grasped his cane, and was on the point of scrambling down the rocks, either to assault the robbers or to read the riot act, when he was suddenly seized by the arm. It was by his friend the goatherd, whose cloak falling open, discovered a belt stuck full of pistols and stilettos. In short, he found himself in the clutches of the captain of the band, who had stationed himself on the rock to look out for travellers and to give notice to his men.

A sad ransacking took place. Trunks were turned inside out, and all the finery and frippery of the Popkins family scattered about the road.

Such a chaos of Venice beads, and Roman mosaics, and Paris bonnets of the young ladies, mingled with the alderman's nightcaps and lambs-wool stockings, and the dandy's hair-brushes, stays, and starched cravats.

The gentlemen were eased of their purses and their watches, the ladies of their jewels; and the whole party were on the point of being carried up into the mountain, when, fortunately, the appearance of soldiery at a distance obliged the robbers to make off with the spoils they had secured, and leave the Popkins family to gather together the remnants of their effects, and make the best of their way to Fondi.

When safe arrived, the alderman made a terrible blustering at the inn; threatened to complain to the ambassador at Naples, and was ready to shake his cane at the whole country. The dandy had many stories to tell of his scuffles with the brigands, who overpowered him merely by numbers. As to the Miss Popkins, they were quite delighted with the adventure, and were occupied the whole evening in writing

it in their journals. They declared the captain of the band to be a most romantic-looking man, they dared to say some unfortunate lover, or exiled nobleman; and several of the band to be very handsome young men—" quite picturesque!"

" In verity," said mine host of Terracina, " they say the captain of the band is *un gallant uomo*."

" A gallant man!" said the Englishman, indignantly: " I 'd have your gallant man hanged like a dog!"

" To dare to meddle with Englishmen!" said Mr. Hobbs.

" And such a family as the Popkinses!" said Mr. Dobbs.

" They ought to come upon the county for damages!" said Mr. Hobbs.

" Our ambassador should make a complaint to the government of Naples," said Mr. Dobbs.

" They should be obliged to drive these rascals out of the country," said Hobbs.

"If they did not, we should declare war against them," said Dobbs.

"Pish!—humbug!" muttered the Englishman to himself, and walked away.

The Englishman had been a little wearied by this story, and by the ultra zeal of his countrymen, and was glad when a summons to their supper relieved him from the crowd of travellers. He walked out with his Venetian friends and a young Frenchman of an interesting demeanour, who had become sociable with them in the course of the conversation. They directed their steps toward the sea, which was lit up by the rising moon.

As they strolled along the beach they came to where a body of soldiers were stationed in a circle. They were guarding a number of galley slaves, who were permitted to refresh themselves in the evening breeze, and sport and roll upon the sand.

The Frenchman paused, and pointed to the group of wretches at their sports. "It is difficult," said he, "to conceive a more frightful mass of crime than is here collected. Many of these have probably been robbers, such as you have heard described. Such is, too often, the career of crime in this country. The parricide, the fratricide, the infanticide, the miscreant of every kind first flies from justice and turns mountain bandit; and then, when wearied of a life of danger, becomes traitor to his brother desperadoes; betrays them to punishment, and thus buys a commutation of his own sentence from death to the galleys: happy in the privilege of wallowing on the shore an hour a day, in this mere state of animal enjoyment."

The fair Venetian shuddered as she cast a look at the horde of wretches at their evening amusement. "They seemed," she said, "like so many serpents writhing together." And yet the idea that some of them had been robbers, those formidable beings that haunted her ima-

gination, made her still cast another fearful glance, as we contemplate some terrible beast of prey, with a degree of awe and horror, even though caged and chained.

The conversation reverted to the tales of banditti which they had heard at the inn. The Englishman condemned some of them as fabrications, others as exaggerations. As to the story of the improvisatore, he pronounced it a mere piece of romance, originating in the heated brain of the narrator.

"And yet," said the Frenchman, "there is so much romance about the real life of those beings, and about the singular country they infest, that it is hard to tell what to reject on the ground of improbability. I have had an adventure happen to myself which gave me an opportunity of getting some insight into their manners and habits, which I found altogether out of the common run of existence."

There was an air of mingled frankness and modesty about the Frenchman which had gained

the good will of the whole party, not even excepting the Englishman. They all eagerly inquired after the particulars of the circumstance he alluded to, and as they strolled slowly up and down the sea-shore, he related the following adventure.

THE PAINTER'S ADVENTURE.

I AM an historical painter by profession, and resided for some time in the family of a foreign prince at his villa, about fifteen miles from Rome, among some of the most interesting scenery of Italy. It is situated on the heights of ancient Tusculum. In its neighbourhood are the ruins of the villas of Cicero, Scilla, Lucullus, Rufinus, and other illustrious Romans, who sought refuge here occasionally from their toils, in the bosom of a soft and luxurious repose. From the midst of delightful bowers, refreshed by the pure mountain-breeze, the eye looks over a romantic landscape full of poetical and historical associations. The Albanian mountains; Tivoli, once the

favourite residence of Horace and Mecænas; the vast, deserted, melancholy Campagna, with the Tiber winding through it, and St. Peter's dome swelling in the midst, the monument, as it were, over the grave of ancient Rome.

I assisted the prince in researches which he was making among the classic ruins of his vicinity: his exertions were highly successful. Many wrecks of admirable statues and fragments of exquisite sculpture were dug up; monuments of the taste and magnificence that reigned in the ancient Tusculan abodes. He had studded his villa and its grounds with statues, relievos, vases, and scarcophagi, thus retrieved from the bosom of the earth.

The mode of life pursued at the villa was delightfully serene, diversified by interesting occupations and elegant leisure. Every one passed the day according to his pleasure or occupation; and we all assembled in a cheerful dinner-party at sunset.

It was on the fourth of November, a beautiful serene day, that we had assembled in the saloon

at the sound of the first dinner-bell. The family were surprised at the absence of the prince's confessor. They waited for him in vain, and at length placed themselves at table. They at first attributed his absence to his having prolonged his customary walk; and the early part of the dinner passed without any uneasiness. When the dessert was served, however, without his making his appearance, they began to feel anxious. They feared he might have been taken ill in some alley of the woods, or that he might have fallen into the hands of robbers. Not far from the villa, with the interval of a small valley, rose the mountains of the Abruzzi, the strong hold of banditti: indeed, the neighbourhood had for some time past been infested by them; and Barbone, a notorious bandit chief, had often been met prowling about the solitudes of Tusculum. The daring enterprises of these ruffians were well known: the objects of their cupidity or vengeance were insecure even in palaces. As yet they had respected the possessions of the prince; but the idea of such dangerous spirits hovering about

the neighbourhood was sufficient to occasion alarm.

The fears of the company increased as evening closed in. The prince ordered out forest guards and domestics with flambeaux to search for the confessor. They had not departed long when a slight noise was heard in the corridor of the ground-floor. The family were dining on the first-floor, and the remaining domestics were occupied in attendance. There was no one on the ground-floor at this moment but the housekeeper, the laundress, and three field labourers, who were resting themselves, and conversing with the women.

I heard the noise from below, and presuming it to be occasioned by the return of the absentee, I left the table and hastened down stairs, eager to gain intelligence that might relieve the anxiety of the prince and princess. I had scarcely reached the last step, when I beheld before me a man dressed as a bandit; a carbine in his hand, and a stiletto and pistols in his belt. His countenance had a mingled expression of ferocity and

trepidation: he sprang upon me, and exclaimed exultingly, "Ecco il principe!"

I saw at once into what hands I had fallen, but endeavoured to summon up coolness and presence of mind. A glance towards the lower end of the corridor showed me several ruffians, clothed and armed in the same manner with the one who had seized me. They were guarding the two females, and the field labourers. The robber, who held me firmly by the collar, demanded repeatedly whether or not I were the prince: his object evidently was to carry off the prince, and extort an immense ransom. He was enraged at receiving none but vague replies, for I felt the importance of misleading him.

A sudden thought struck me how I might extricate myself from his clutches. I was unarmed, it is true, but I was vigorous. His companions were at a distance. By a sudden exertion I might wrest myself from him, and spring up the staircase, whither he would not dare to follow me singly. The idea was put in practice as soon as conceived. The ruffian's throat was

bare; with my right hand I seized him by it, with my left hand I grasped the arm which held the carbine. The suddenness of my attack took him completely unawares, and the strangling nature of my grasp paralysed him. He choked and faltered. I felt his hand relaxing its hold, and was on the point of jerking myself away, and darting up the staircase, before he could recover himself, when I was suddenly seized by some one from behind.

I had to let go my grasp. The bandit, once more released, fell upon me with fury, and gave me several blows with the butt end of his carbine, one of which wounded me severely in the forehead and covered me with blood. He took advantage of my being stunned to rifle me of my watch, and whatever valuables I had about my person.

When I recovered from the effect of the blow, I heard the voice of the chief of the banditti, who exclaimed—" Quello e il principe; siamo contente; andiamo!" (It is the prince; enough; let us be off.) The band immediately closed

round me and dragged me out of the palace, bearing off the three labourers likewise.

I had no hat on, and the blood flowed from my wound; I managed to stanch it, however, with my pocket-handkerchief, which I bound round my forehead. The captain of the band conducted me in triumph, supposing me to be the prince. We had gone some distance before he learnt his mistake from one of the labourers. His rage was terrible. It was too late to return to the villa and endeavour to retrieve his error, for by this time the alarm must have been given, and every one in arms. He darted at me a ferocious look—swore I had deceived him, and caused him to miss his fortune—and told me to prepare for death. The rest of the robbers were equally furious. I saw their hands upon their poniards, and I knew that death was seldom an empty threat with these ruffians. The labourers saw the peril into which their information had betrayed me, and eagerly assured the captain that I was a man for whom the prince would pay a great ransom.

This produced a pause. For my part, I cannot say that I had been much dismayed by their menaces. I mean not to make any boast of courage; but I have been so schooled to hardship during the late revolutions, and have beheld death around me in so many perilous and disastrous scenes, that I have become in some measure callous to its terrors. The frequent hazard of life makes a man at length as reckless of it as a gambler of his money. To their threat of death, I replied, "that the sooner it was executed the better." This reply seemed to astonish the captain; and the prospect of ransom held out by the labourers had, no doubt, a still greater effect on him. He considered for a moment, assumed a calmer manner, and made a sign to his companions, who had remained waiting for my death-warrant. "Forward!" said he; "we will see about this matter by and by!"

We descended rapidly towards the road of La Molara, which leads to Rocca Priori. In the midst of this road is a solitary inn. The captain

ordered the troop to halt at the distance of a pistol-shot from it, and enjoined profound silence. He approached the threshold alone, with noiseless steps. He examined the outside of the door very narrowly, and then returning precipitately, made a sign for the troop to continue its march in silence. It has since been ascertained, that this was one of those infamous inns which are the secret resorts of banditti. The innkeeper had an understanding with the captain, as he most probably had with the chiefs of the different bands. When any of the patroles and gens-d'armes were quartered at his house, the brigands were warned of it by a preconcerted signal on the door; when there was no such signal, they might enter with safety, and be sure of welcome.

After pursuing our road a little further, we struck off towards the woody mountains which envelop Rocca Priori. Our march was long and painful; with many circuits and windings: at length we clambered a steep ascent, covered with a thick forest; and when we had reached

the centre, I was told to seat myself on the ground. No sooner had I done so than, at a sign from their chief, the robbers surrounded me, and spreading their great cloaks from one to the other, formed a kind of pavilion of mantles, to which their bodies might be said to serve as columns. The captain then struck a light, and a flambeau was lit immediately. The mantles were extended to prevent the light of the flambeau from being seen through the forest. Anxious as was my situation, I could not look round upon this screen of dusky drapery, relieved by the bright colours of the robbers' garments, the gleaming of their weapons, and the variety of strong-marked countenances, lit up by the flambeau, without admiring the picturesque effect of the scene. It was quite theatrical.

The captain now held an inkhorn, and giving me pen and paper, ordered me to write what he should dictate. I obeyed. It was a demand, couched in the style of robber eloquence, "that the prince should send three thousand dollars for

my ransom; or that my death should be the consequence of a refusal."

I knew enough of the desperate character of these beings to feel assured this was not an idle menace. Their only mode of insuring attention to their demands is to make the infliction of the penalty inevitable. I saw at once, however, that the demand was preposterous, and made in improper language.

I told the captain so, and assured him that so extravagant a sum would never be granted.—"That I was neither a friend nor relative of the prince, but a mere artist, employed to execute certain paintings.—That I had nothing to offer as a ransom but the price of my labours: if this were not sufficient, my life was at their disposal; it was a thing on which I set but little value."

I was the more hardy in my reply, because I saw that coolness and hardihood had an effect upon the robbers. It is true, as I finished speaking, the captain laid his hand upon his stiletto; but he restrained himself, and snatch-

ing the letter, folded it, and ordered me in a peremptory tone to address it to the prince. He then despatched one of the labourers with it to Tusculum, who promised to return with all possible speed.

The robbers now prepared themselves for sleep; and I was told that I might do the same. They spread their great cloaks on the ground, and lay down around me. One was stationed at a little distance to keep watch, and was relieved every two hours. The strangeness and wildness of this mountain bivouac among lawless beings, whose hands seemed ever ready to grasp the stiletto, and with whom life was so trivial and insecure, was enough to banish repose. The coldness of the earth and of the dew, however, had a still greater effect than mental causes in disturbing my rest. The airs wafted to these mountains from the distant Mediterranean diffused a great chilliness as the night advanced. An expedient suggested itself. I called one of my fellow-prisoners, the labourers, and made him lie down beside me. Whenever one of my

limbs became chilled, I approached it to the robust limb of my neighbour, and borrowed some of his warmth. In this way I was able to obtain a little sleep.

Day at length dawned, and I was roused from my slumber by the voice of the chieftain. He desired me to rise and follow him. I obeyed. On considering his physiognomy attentively, it appeared a little softened. He even assisted me in scrambling up the steep forest, among rocks and brambles. Habit had made him a vigorous mountaineer; but I found it excessively toilsome to climb these rugged heights. We arrived at length at the summit of the mountain.

Here it was that I felt all the enthusiasm of my art suddenly awakened; and I forgot in an instant all my perils and fatigues at this magnificent view of the sunrise in the midst of the mountains of Abruzzi. It was on these heights that Hannibal first pitched his camp, and pointed out Rome to his followers. The eye embraces a vast extent of country. The minor

height of Tusculum, with its villas and its sacred ruins, lie below; the Sabine hills and the Albanian mountains stretch on either hand; and beyond Tusculum and Frascati spreads out the immense Campagna, with its lines of tombs, and here and there a broken aqueduct stretching across it, and the towers and domes of the eternal city in the midst.

Fancy this scene lit up by the glories of a rising sun, and bursting upon my sight as I looked forth from among the majestic forests of the Abruzzi. Fancy, too, the savage foreground, made still more savage by groups of banditti, armed and dressed in their wild picturesque manner, and you will not wonder that the enthusiasm of a painter for a moment overpowered all his other feelings.

The banditti were astonished at my admiration of a scene which familiarity had made so common in their eyes. I took advantage of their halting at this spot, drew forth a quire of drawing-paper, and began to sketch the features of the landscape. The height on which I was

seated was wild and solitary, separated from the ridge of Tusculum by a valley nearly three miles wide, though the distance appeared less from the purity of the atmosphere. This height was one of the favourite retreats of the banditti, commanding a look-out over the country; while at the same time it was covered with forests, and distant from the populous haunts of men.

While I was sketching, my attention was called off for a moment by the cries of birds, and the bleatings of sheep. I looked around, but could see nothing of the animals which uttered them. They were repeated, and appeared to come from the summits of the trees. On looking more narrowly, I perceived six of the robbers perched in the tops of oaks, which grew on the breezy crest of the mountain, and commanded an uninterrupted prospect. From hence they were keeping a look-out, like so many vultures; casting their eyes into the depths of the valley below us; communicating with each other by signs, or holding discourse in sounds which might be mistaken by the wayfarer for the cries

of hawks and crows, or the bleating of the mountain flocks. After they had reconnôitred the neighbourhood, and finished their singular discourse, they descended from their airy perch, and returned to their prisoners. The captain posted three of them at three naked sides of the mountain, while he remained to guard us with what appeared his most trusty companion.

I had my book of sketches in my hand; he requested to see it, and after having run his eye over it, expressed himself convinced of the truth of my assertion, that I was a painter. I thought I saw a gleam of good feeling dawning in him, and determined to avail myself of it. I knew that the worst of men have their good points, and their accessible sides if one would but study them carefully. Indeed there is a singular mixture in the character of the Italian robber. With reckless ferocity he often mingles traits of kindness and good humour. He is not always radically bad; but driven to his course of life by some unpremeditated crime, the effect of those sudden bursts of passion to which the Ita-

lian temperament is prone. This has compelled him to take to the mountains, or as it is technically termed among them, "andare in campagna." He has become a robber by profession; but like a soldier, when not in action, he can lay aside his weapon and his fierceness, and become like other men.

I took occasion, from the observations of the captain on my sketchings, to fall into conversation with him. I found him sociable and communicative. By degrees I became completely at my ease with him. I had fancied I perceived about him a degree of self-love, which I determined to make use of. I assumed an air of careless frankness, and told him, that, as an artist, I pretended to the power of judging of the physiognomy; that I thought I perceived something in his features and demeanour which announced him worthy of higher fortunes; that he was not formed to exercise the profession to which he had abandoned himself; that he had talents and qualities fitted for a nobler sphere of action; that he had but to change

his course of life, and in a legitimate career, the same courage and endowments which now made him an object of terror would ensure him the applause and admiration of society.

I had not mistaken my man; my discourse both touched and excited him. He seized my hand, pressed it, and replied with strong emotion—"You have guessed the truth; you have judged of me rightly." He remained for a moment silent; then with a kind of effort, he resumed—"I will tell you some particulars of my life, and you will perceive that it was the oppression of others, rather than my own crimes, which drove me to the mountains. I sought to serve my fellow-men, and they have persecuted me from among them." We seated ourselves on the grass, and the robber gave me the following anecdotes of his history.

THE STORY OF THE BANDIT CHIEFTAIN.

I AM a native of the village of Prossedi. My father was easy enough in circumstances, and we lived peaceably and independently, cultivating our fields. All went on well with us until a new chief of the Sbirri was sent to our village to take command of the police. He was an arbitrary fellow, prying into every thing, and practising all sorts of vexations and oppressions in the discharge of his office. I was at that time eighteen years of age, and had a natural love of justice and good neighbourhood. I had also a little education, and knew something of history, so as to be able to judge a little of men and their actions. All this inspired me with hatred for this paltry despot. My own family, also, became the object of his suspicion or dis-

like, and felt more than once the arbitrary abuse of his power. These things worked together in my mind, and I gasped after vengeance. My character was always ardent and energetic, and, acted upon by the love of justice, determined me, by one blow, to rid the country of the tyrant.

Full of my project, I rose one morning before peep of day, and concealing a stiletto under my waistcoat—here you see it!—(and he drew forth a long keen poniard) I lay in wait for him in the outskirts of the village. I knew all his haunts, and his habit of making his rounds and prowling about like a wolf in the gray of the morning. At length I met him, and attacked him with fury. He was armed, but I took him unawares, and was full of youth and vigour. I gave him repeated blows to make sure work, and laid him lifeless at my feet.

When I was satisfied that I had done for him, I returned with all haste to the village, but had the ill luck to meet two of the Sbirri as I en-

tered it. They accosted me, and asked if I had seen their chief. I assumed an air of tranquillity, and told them I had not. They continued on their way, and within a few hours brought back the dead body to Prossedi. Their suspicions of me being already awakened, I was arrested and thrown into prison. Here I lay several weeks, when the Prince, who was Seigneur of Prossedi, directed judicial proceedings against me. I was brought to trial, and a witness was produced, who pretended to have seen me flying with precipitation not far from the bleeding body, and so I was condemned to the galleys for thirty years.

"Curse on such laws!" vociferated the bandit, foaming with rage: "Curse on such a government! and ten thousand curses on the Prince who caused me to be adjudged so rigorously, while so many other Roman princes harbour and protect assassins a thousand times more culpable! What had I done but what was inspired by a love of justice and my country? Why was my

act more culpable than that of Brutus, when he sacrificed Cæsar to the cause of liberty and justice ?"

There was something at once both lofty and ludicrous in the rhapsody of this robber chief, thus associating himself with one of the great names of antiquity. It showed, however, that he had at least the merit of knowing the remarkable facts in the history of his country. He became more calm, and resumed his narrative.

I was conducted to Civita Vecchia in fetters. My heart was burning with rage. I had been married scarce six months to a woman whom I passionately loved, and who was pregnant. My family was in despair. For a long time I made unsuccessful efforts to break my chain. At length I found a morsel of iron, which I hid carefully, and endeavoured, with a pointed flint, to fashion it into a kind of file. I occupied myself in this work during the night-time, and when it was finished, I made out, after a long time, to sever one of the rings of my chain. My flight was successful.

I wandered for several weeks in the mountains which surround Prossedi, and found means to inform my wife of the place where I was concealed. She came often to see me. I had determined to put myself at the head of an armed band. She endeavoured, for a long time, to dissuade me, but finding my resolution fixed, she at length united in my project of vengeance, and brought me, herself, my poniard. By her means I communicated with several brave fellows of the neighbouring villages, who I knew to be ready to take to the mountains, and only panting for an opportunity to exercise their daring spirits. We soon formed a combination, procured arms, and we have had ample opportunities of revenging ourselves for the wrongs and injuries which most of us have suffered. Every thing has succeeded with us until now, and had it not been for our blunder in mistaking you for the Prince, our fortunes would have been made.

Here the robber concluded his story. He had talked himself into complete companionship, and assured me he no longer bore me any grudge for the error of which I had been the innocent cause. He even professed a kindness for me, and wished me to remain some time with them. He promised to give me a sight of certain grottos which they occupied beyond Villetri, and whither they resorted during the intervals of their expeditions. He assured me that they led a jovial life there; had plenty of good cheer; slept on beds of moss; and were waited upon by young and beautiful females, whom I might take for models.

I confess I felt my curiosity roused by his descriptions of the grottos and their inhabitants: they realized those scenes in robber story which I had always looked upon as mere creations of the fancy. I should gladly have accepted his invitation, and paid a visit to these caverns, could I have felt more secure in my company.

I began to find my situation less painful. I

had evidently propitiated the good will of the chieftain, and hoped that he might release me for a moderate ransom. A new alarm, however, awaited me. While the captain was looking out with impatience for the return of the messenger who had been sent to the Prince, the centinel who had been posted on the side of the mountain facing the plain of La Molara came running towards us with precipitation. "We are betrayed!" exclaimed he. "The police of Frescati are after us. A party of Carabineers have just stopped at the inn below the mountain." Then, laying his hand on his stiletto, he swore with a terrible oath, that if they made the least movement towards the mountain, my life and the lives of my fellow-prisoners should answer for it.

The chieftain resumed all his ferocity of demeanour, and approved of what his companion said; but when the latter had returned to his post, he turned to me with a softened air: "I must act as chief," said he, "and humour my dangerous subalterns. It is a law with us to

kill our prisoners rather than suffer them to be rescued ; but do not be alarmed. In case we are surprised, keep by me. Fly with us, and I will consider myself responsible for your life."

There was nothing very consolatory in this arrangement, which would have placed me between two dangers. I scarcely knew, in case of flight, which I should have most to apprehend from, the carbines of the pursuers, or the stilettos of the pursued. I remained silent, however, and endeavoured to maintain a look of tranquillity.

For an hour was I kept in this state of peril and anxiety. The robbers, crouching among their leafy coverts, kept an eagle watch upon the carabineers below, as they loitered about the inn ; sometimes lolling about the portal ; sometimes disappearing for several minutes ; then sallying out, examining their weapons ; pointing in different directions, and apparently asking questions about the neighbourhood. Not a movement, a gesture, was lost upon the keen eyes of the brigands. At length we were re-

lieved from our apprehensions. The carabineers having finished their refreshment, seized their arms, continued along the valley towards the great road, and gradually left the mountain behind them. "I felt almost certain," said the chief, "that they could not be sent after us. They know too well how prisoners have fared in our hands on similar occasions. Our laws in this respect are inflexible, and are necessary for our safety. If we once flinched from them, there would no longer be such thing as a ransom to be procured."

There were no signs yet of the messenger's return. I was preparing to resume my sketching, when the Captain drew a quire of paper from his knapsack. "Come," said he, laughing, "you are a painter,—take my likeness. The leaves of your portfolio are small,—draw it on this." I gladly consented, for it was a study that seldom presents itself to a painter. I recollected that Salvator Rosa in his youth had voluntarily sojourned for a time among the banditti of Calabria, and had filled his mind with

the savage scenery and savage associates by which he was surrounded. I seized my pencil with enthusiasm at the thought. I found the captain the most docile of subjects, and, after various shiftings of position, I placed him in an attitude to my mind.

Picture to yourself a stern muscular figure, in fanciful bandit costume; with pistols and poniards in belt; his brawny neck bare; a handkerchief loosely thrown round it, and the two ends in front strung with rings of all kinds, the spoils of travellers; relics and medals hung on his breast; his hat decorated with various coloured ribands; his vest and short breeches of bright colours and finely embroidered; his legs in buskins or leggings. Fancy him on a mountain height, among wild rocks and rugged oaks, leaning on his carbine, as if meditating some exploit; while far below are beheld villages and villas, the scenes of his maraudings, with the wide Campagna dimly extending in the distance.

The robber was pleased with the sketch, and

seemed to admire himself upon paper. I had scarcely finished, when the labourer arrived who had been sent for my ransom. He had reached Tusculum two hours after midnight. He brought me a letter from the prince, who was in bed at the time of his arrival. As I had predicted, he treated the demand as extravagant, but offered five hundred dollars for my ransom. Having no money by him at the moment, he had sent a note for the amount, payable to whomsoever should conduct me safe and sound to Rome. I presented the note of hand to the chieftain: he received it with a shrug. "Of what use are notes of hand to us?" said he. "Who can we send with you to Rome to receive it? We are all marked men; known and described at every gate and military post and village church-door. No; we must have gold and silver: let the sum be paid in cash, and you shall be restored to liberty."

The captain again placed a sheet of paper before me to communicate his determination to the prince. When I had finished the letter, and

took the sheet from the quire, I found on the opposite side of it the portrait which I had just been tracing. I was about to tear it off and give it to the chief.

"Hold!" said he, "let it go to Rome: let them see what kind of looking fellow I am. Perhaps the prince and his friends may form as good an opinion of me from my face as you have done."

This was said sportively, yet it was evident there was vanity lurking at the bottom. Even this wary, distrustful chief of banditti forgot for a moment his usual foresight and precaution, in the common wish to be admired. He never reflected what use might be made of this portrait in his pursuit and conviction.

The letter was folded and directed, and the messenger departed again for Tusculum. It was now eleven o'clock in the morning, and as yet we had eaten nothing. In spite of all my anxiety, I began to feel a craving appetite. I was glad, therefore to hear the captain talk something about eating. He observed that for three days

and nights they had been lurking about among rocks and woods, meditating their expedition to Tusculum, during which time all their provisions had been exhausted. He should now take measures to procure a supply. Leaving me therefore in charge of his comrade, in whom he appeared to have implicit confidence, he departed, assuring me that in less than two hours we should make a good dinner. Where it was to come from was an enigma to me, though it was evident these beings had their secret friends and agents throughout the country.

Indeed, the inhabitants of these mountains and of the valleys which they embosom are a rude, half civilized set. The towns and villages among the forests of the Abruzzi, shut up from the rest of the world, are almost like savage dens. It is wonderful that such rude abodes, so little known and visited, should be embosomed in the midst of one of the most travelled and civilized countries of Europe. Among these regions the robber prowls unmolested; not a mountaineer hesitates to give him secret harbour

and assistance. The shepherds, however, who tend their flocks among the mountains, are the favourite emissaries of the robbers, when they would send messages down to the valleys either for ransom or supplies.

The shepherds of the Abruzzi are as wild as the scenes they frequent. They are clad in a rude garb of black or brown sheep-skin; they have high conical hats, and coarse sandals of cloth bound round their legs with thongs similar to those worn by the robbers. They carry long staffs, on which, as they lean, they form picturesque objects in the lonely landscape, and they are followed by their ever constant companion, the dog. They are a curious questioning set, glad at any time to relieve the monotony of their solitude by the conversation of the passer by; and the dog will lend an attentive ear, and put on as sagacious and inquisitive a look as his master.

But I am wandering from my story. I was now left alone with one of the robbers, the confidential companion of the chief. He was the

youngest and most vigorous of the band; and though his countenance had something of that dissolute fierceness which seems natural to this desperate, lawless mode of life, yet there were traces of manly beauty about it. As an artist I could not but admire it. I had remarked in him an air of abstraction and reverie, and at times a movement of inward suffering and impatience. He now sat on the ground, his elbows on his knees, his head resting between his clenched fists, and his eyes fixed on the earth with an expression of sad and bitter rumination. I had grown familiar with him from repeated conversations, and had found him superior in mind to the rest of the band. I was anxious to seize any opportunity of sounding the feelings of these singular beings. I fancied I read in the countenance of this one traces of self-condemnation and remorse; and the ease with which I had drawn forth the confidence of the chieftain encouraged me to hope the same with his follower.

After a little preliminary conversation, I ven-

tured to ask him if he did not feel regret at having abandoned his family, and taken to this dangerous profession. "I feel," replied he, "but one regret, and that will end only with my life." As he said this, he pressed his clenched fists upon his bosom, drew his breath through his set teeth, and added with deep emotion, "I have something within here that stifles me; it is like a burning iron consuming my very heart. I could tell you a miserable story—but not now—another time."

He relapsed into his former position, and sat with his head between his hands, muttering to himself in broken ejaculations, and what appeared at times to be curses and maledictions. I saw he was not in a mood to be disturbed, so I left him to himself. In a little while the exhaustion of his feelings, and probably the fatigues he had undergone in this expedition, began to produce drowsiness. He struggled with it for a time, but the warmth and stillness of mid-day made it irresistible, and he at length stretched himself upon the herbage and fell asleep.

I now beheld a chance of escape within my reach. My guard lay before me at my mercy. His vigorous limbs relaxed by sleep—his bosom open for the blow—his carbine slipped from his nerveless grasp, and lying by his side—his stiletto half out of the pocket in which it was usually carried. But two of his comrades were in sight, and those at a considerable distance on the edge of the mountain, their backs turned to us, and their attention occupied in keeping a look-out upon the plain. Through a strip of intervening forest, and at the foot of a steep descent, I beheld the village of Rocca Priori. To have secured the carbine of the sleeping brigand; to have seized upon his poniard, and have plunged it in his heart, would have been the work of an instant. Should he die without noise, I might dart through the forest and down to Rocca Priori before my flight might be discovered. In case of alarm, I should still have a fair start of the robbers, and a chance of getting beyond the reach of their shot.

Here then was an opportunity for both escape

and vengeance; perilous indeed, but powerfully tempting. Had my situation been more critical I could not have resisted it. I reflected, however, for a moment. The attempt, if successful, would be followed by the sacrifice of my two fellow-prisoners, who were sleeping profoundly, and could not be awakened in time to escape. The labourer who had gone after the ransom might also fall a victim to the rage of the robbers, without the money which he brought being saved. Besides, the conduct of the chief towards me made me feel certain of speedy deliverance. These reflections overcame the first powerful impulse, and I calmed the turbulent agitation which it had awakened.

I again took out my materials for drawing, and amused myself with sketching the magnificent prospect. It was now about noon, and every thing had sunk into repose, like the bandit that lay sleeping before me. The noontide stillness that reigned over these mountains, the vast landscape below, gleaming with distant towns, and dotted with various habitations and

signs of life, yet all so silent, had a powerful effect upon my mind. The intermediate valleys, too, which lie among the mountains, have a peculiar air of solitude. Few sounds are heard at midday to break the quiet of the scene. Sometimes the whistle of a solitary muleteer, lagging with his lazy animal along the road which winds through the centre of the valley; sometimes the faint piping of a shepherd's reed from the side of the mountain, or sometimes the bell of an ass slowly pacing along, followed by a monk with bare feet, and bare, shining head, and carrying provisions to his convent.

I had continued to sketch for some time among my sleeping companions, when at length I saw the captain of the band approaching, followed by a peasant leading a mule, on which was a well-filled sack. I at first apprehended that this was some new prey fallen into the hands of the robbers; but the contented look of the peasant soon relieved me, and I was rejoiced to hear that it was our promised repast. The brigands now came running from the three sides of the moun-

tain, having the quick scent of vultures. Every one busied himself in unloading the mule, and relieving the sack of its contents.

The first thing that made its appearance was an enormous ham, of a colour and plumpness that would have inspired the pencil of Teniers; it was followed by a large cheese, a bag of boiled chestnuts, a little barrel of wine, and a quantity of good household bread. Every thing was arranged on the grass with a degree of symmetry; and the captain, presenting me his knife, requested me to help myself. We all seated ourselves round the viands, and nothing was heard for a time but the sound of vigorous mastication, or the gurgling of the barrel of wine as it revolved briskly about the circle. My long fasting, and the mountain air and exercise, had given me a keen appetite; and never did repast appear to me more excellent or picturesque.

From time to time one of the band was despatched to keep a look-out upon the plain. No enemy was at hand, and the dinner was undisturbed. The peasant received nearly three

times the value of his provisions, and set off down the mountain highly satisfied with his bargain. I felt invigorated by the hearty meal I had made, and notwithstanding that the wound I had received the evening before was painful, yet I could not but feel extremely interested and gratified by the singular scenes continually presented to me. Every thing was picturesque about these wild beings and their haunts. Their bivouacs; their groups on guard; their indolent noontide repose on the mountain-brow; their rude repast on the herbage among rocks and trees; every thing presented a study for a painter: but it was towards the approach of evening that I felt the highest enthusiasm awakened.

The setting sun, declining beyond the vast campagna, shed its rich yellow beams on the woody summits of the Abruzzi. Several mountains crowned with snow shone brilliantly in the distance, contrasting their brightness with others, which, thrown into shade, assumed deep tints of purple and violet. As the evening advanced, the landscape darkened into a sterner character.

The immense solitude around; the wild mountains broken into rocks and precipices, intermingled with vast oaks, corks, and chestnuts; and the groups of banditti in the foreground, reminded me of the savage scenes of Salvator Rosa.

To beguile the time, the captain proposed to his comrades to spread before me their jewels and cameos, as I must doubtless be a judge of such articles, and able to form an estimate of their value. He set the example, the others followed it; and in a few moments I saw the grass before me sparkling with jewels and gems that would have delighted the eyes of an antiquary or a fine lady.

Among them were several precious jewels, and antique intaglios and cameos of great value; the spoils, doubtless, of travellers of distinction. I found that they were in the habit of selling their booty in the frontier towns: but as these in general were thinly and poorly peopled, and little frequented by travellers, they could offer no market for such valuable articles of taste and

luxury. I suggested to them the certainty of their readily obtaining great prices for these gems among the rich strangers with which Rome was thronged.

The impression made upon their greedy minds was immediately apparent. One of the band, a young man, and the least known, requested permission of the captain to depart the following day, in disguise, for Rome, for the purpose of traffic; promising, on the faith of a bandit (a sacred pledge among them) to return in two days to any place he might appoint. The captain consented, and a curious scene took place: the robbers crowded round him eagerly, confiding to him such of their jewels as they wished to dispose of, and giving him instructions what to demand. There was much bargaining and exchanging and selling of trinkets among them; and I beheld my watch, which had a chain and valuable seals, purchased by the young robber-merchant of the ruffian who had plundered me, for sixty dollars. I now conceived a

faint hope that, if it went to Rome, I might somehow or other regain possession of it *.

In the mean time day declined, and no messenger returned from Tusculum. The idea of passing another night in the woods was extremely disheartening, for I began to be satisfied with what I had seen of robber-life. The chieftain now ordered his men to follow him, that he might station them at their posts; adding, that if the messenger did not return before night, they must shift their quarters to some other place.

I was again left alone with the young bandit who had before guarded me: he had the same gloomy air and haggard eye, with now and then a bitter sardonic smile. I was determined to probe this ulcerated heart, and reminded him of a kind of promise he had given me to tell me

* The hopes of the artist were not disappointed—the robber was stopped at one of the gates of Rome. Something in his looks or deportment had excited suspicion. He was searched, and the valuable trinkets found on him sufficiently evinced his character. On applying to the police, the artist's watch was returned to him.

the cause of his suffering. It seemed to me as if these troubled spirits were glad of any opportunity to disburthen themselves, and of having some fresh, undiseased mind with which they could communicate. I had hardly made the request but he seated himself by my side, and gave me his story in, as nearly as I can recollect, the following words.

STORY OF THE YOUNG ROBBER.

I WAS born at the little town of Frosinone, which lies at the skirts of the Abruzzi. My father had made a little property in trade, and gave me some education, as he intended me for the church; but I had kept gay company too much to relish the cowl, so I grew up a loiterer about the place. I was a heedless fellow, a little quarrelsome on occasion, but good-humoured in the main; so I made my way very well for a time, until I fell in love. There lived in our town a surveyor or land-bailiff of the prince's, who had a young daughter, a beautiful girl of sixteen: she was looked upon as something better than the common run of our townsfolk, and was kept almost entirely at home. I saw her occasionally, and became madly in love with her

—she looked so fresh and tender, and so different from the sun-burnt females to which I had been accustomed.

As my father kept me in money, I always dressed well, and took all opportunities of showing myself off to advantage in the eyes of the little beauty. I used to see her at church; and as I could play a little upon the guitar, I gave a tune sometimes under her window of an evening; and I tried to have interviews with her in her father's vineyard, not far from the town, where she sometimes walked. She was evidently pleased with me, but she was young and shy; and her father kept a strict eye upon her, and took alarm at my attentions, for he had a bad opinion of me, and looked for a better match for his daughter. I became furious at the difficulties thrown in my way, having been accustomed always to easy success among the women, being considered one of the smartest young fellows of the place.

Her father brought home a suitor for her, a rich farmer, from a neighbouring town. The

wedding-day was appointed, and preparations were making. I got sight of her at her window, and I thought she looked sadly at me. I determined the match should not take place, cost what it might. I met her intended bridegroom in the market-place, and could not restrain the expression of my rage. A few hot words passed between us, when I drew my stiletto and stabbed him to the heart. I fled to a neighbouring church for refuge, and with a little money I obtained absolution, but I did not dare to venture from my asylum.

At that time our captain was forming his troop. He had known me from boyhood; and hearing of my situation, came to me in secret, and made such offers, that I agreed to enrol myself among his followers. Indeed, I had more than once thought of taking to this mode of life, having known several brave fellows of the mountains, who used to spend their money freely among us youngsters of the town. I accordingly left my asylum late one night, repaired to the appointed place of meet-

ing, took the oaths prescribed, and became one of the troop. We were for some time in a distant part of the mountains, and our wild adventurous kind of life hit my fancy wonderfully, and diverted my thoughts. At length they returned with all their violence to the recollection of Rosetta: the solitude in which I often found myself gave me time to brood over her image; and, as I have kept watch at night over our sleeping camp in the mountains, my feelings have been roused almost to a fever.

At length we shifted our ground, and determined to make a descent upon the road between Terracina and Naples. In the course of our expedition we passed a day or two in the woody mountains, which rise above Frosinone. I cannot tell you how I felt when I looked down upon the place, and distinguished the residence of Rosetta. I determined to have an interview with her;—but to what purpose? I could not expect that she would quit her home, and accompany me in my hazardous life among the mountains. She had been brought up too tenderly

for that; and when I looked upon the women who were associated with some of our troop, I could not have borne the thoughts of her being their companion. All return to my former life was likewise hopeless, for a price was set upon my head. Still I determined to see her; the very hazard and fruitlessness of the thing made me furious to accomplish it.

It is about three weeks since I persuaded our captain to draw down to the vicinity of Frosinone, in hopes of entrapping some of its principal inhabitants, and compelling them to a ransom. We were lying in ambush towards evening, not far from the vineyard of Rosetta's father. I stole quietly from my companions, and drew near to reconnoitre the place of her frequent walks. How my heart beat when among the vines I beheld the gleaming of a white dress! I knew it must be Rosetta's; it being rare for any female of the place to dress in white. I advanced secretly and without noise, until putting aside the vines, I stood suddenly before her. She uttered a piercing shriek, but I seized

her in my arms, put my hand upon her mouth, and conjured her to be silent. I poured out all the frenzy of my passion; offered to renounce my mode of life; to put my fate in her hands; to fly with her where we might live in safety together. All that I could say or do would not pacify her. Instead of love, horror and affright seemed to have taken possession of her breast. She struggled partly from my grasp, and filled the air with her cries.

In an instant the captain and the rest of my companions were around us. I would have given any thing at that moment had she been safe out of our hands, and in her father's house. It was too late. The captain pronounced her a prize, and ordered that she should be borne to the mountains. I represented to him that she was my prize; that I had a previous claim to her; and I mentioned my former attachment. He sneered bitterly in reply; observed that brigands had no business with village intrigues, and that, according to the laws of the troop, all spoils of the kind were determined by lot. Love and

jealousy were raging in my heart, but I had to choose between obedience and death. I surrendered her to the captain, and we made for the mountains.

She was overcome by affright, and her steps were so feeble and faltering that it was necessary to support her. I could not endure the idea that my comrades should touch her, and assuming a forced tranquillity, begged that she might be confided to me, as one to whom she was more accustomed. The captain regarded me, for a moment, with a searching look, but I bore it without flinching, and he consented. I took her in my arms; she was almost senseless. Her head rested on my shoulder; I felt her breath on my face, and it seemed to fan the flame which devoured me. Oh God! to have this glowing treasure in my arms, and yet to think it was not mine!

We arrived at the foot of the mountain. I ascended it with difficulty, particularly where the woods were thick, but I would not relinquish my delicious burthen. I reflected with rage,

however, that I must soon do so. The thoughts that so delicate a creature must be abandoned to my rude companions maddened me. I felt tempted, the stiletto in my hand, to cut my way through them all, and bear her off in triumph. I scarcely conceived the idea before I saw its rashness; but my brain was fevered with the thought that any but myself should enjoy her charms. I endeavoured to outstrip my companions by the quickness of my movements, and to get a little distance ahead, in case any favourable opportunity of escape should present. Vain effort! The voice of the captain suddenly ordered a halt. I trembled, but had to obey. The poor girl partly opened a languid eye, but was without strength or motion. I laid her upon the grass. The captain darted on me a terrible look of suspicion, and ordered me to scour the woods with my companions in search of some shepherd, who might be sent to her father's to demand a ransom.

I saw at once the peril. To resist with violence was certain death, but to leave her alone,

in the power of the captain! I spoke out then with a fervour, inspired by my passion and my despair. I reminded the captain that I was the first to seize her; that she was my prize; and that my previous attachment for her ought to make her sacred among my companions. I insisted, therefore, that he should pledge me his word to respect her, otherwise I should refuse obedience to his orders. His only reply was to cock his carbine, and at the signal my comrades did the same. They laughed with cruelty at my impotent rage. What could I do? I felt the madness of resistance. I was menaced on all hands, and my companions obliged me to follow them. She remained alone with the chief—yes, alone—and almost lifeless!—

Here the robber paused in his recital, overpowered by his emotions. Great drops of sweat stood on his forehead; he panted rather than breathed; his brawny bosom rose and fell like the waves of a troubled sea. When he had become a little calm, he continued his recital.

I was not long in finding a shepherd, said

he. I ran with the rapidity of a deer, eager, if possible, to get back before what I dreaded might take place. I had left my companions far behind, and I rejoined them before they had reached one half the distance I had made. I hurried them back to the place where we had left the captain. As we approached I beheld him seated by the side of Rosetta. His triumphant look, and the desolate condition of the unfortunate girl, left me no doubt of her fate. I know not how I restrained my fury.

It was with extreme difficulty and by guiding her hand that she was made to trace a few characters, requesting her father to send three hundred dollars as her ransom. The letter was despatched by the shepherd. When he was gone, the chief turned sternly to me: "You have set an example," said he, "of mutiny and self-will, which, if indulged, would be ruinous to the troop. Had I treated you as our laws require, this bullet would have been driven through your brain. But you are an old friend; I have borne patiently with your fury and your folly. I have

even protected you from a foolish passion that would have unmanned you. As to this girl, the laws of our association must have their course." So saying, he gave his commands: lots were drawn, and the helpless girl was abandoned to the troop.

Here the robber paused again, panting with fury, and it was some moments before he could resume his story.

Hell, said he, was raging in my heart. I beheld the impossibility of avenging myself; and I felt that, according to the articles in which we stood bound to one another, the captain was in the right. I rushed with frenzy from the place; I threw myself upon the earth; tore up the grass with my hands, and beat my head and gnashed my teeth in agony and rage. When at length I returned, I beheld the wretched victim, pale, dishevelled, her dress torn and disordered. An emotion of pity, for a moment, subdued my fiercer feelings. I bore her to the foot of a tree, and leaned her gently against it. I took my gourd, which was filled with wine,

and applying it to her lips, endeavoured to make her swallow a little. To what a condition was she reduced! she, whom I had once seen the pride of Frosinone; who but a short time before I had beheld sporting in her father's vineyard, so fresh, and beautiful, and happy! Her teeth were clenched; her eyes fixed on the ground; her form without motion, and in a state of absolute insensibility. I hung over her in an agony of recollection at all that she had been, and of anguish at what I now beheld her. I darted round a look of horror at my companions, who seemed like so many fiends exulting in the downfall of an angel; and I felt a horror at myself for being their accomplice.

The captain, always suspicious, saw, with his usual penetration, what was passing within me, and ordered me to go upon the ridge of the woods, to keep a look out over the neighbourhood, and await the return of the shepherd. I obeyed, of course, stifling the fury that raged within me, though I felt, for the moment, that he was my most deadly foe.

On my way, however, a ray of reflection came across my mind. I perceived that the captain was but following, with strictness, the terrible laws to which we had sworn fidelity. That the passion by which I had been blinded might, with justice, have been fatal to me, but for his forbearance; that he had penetrated my soul, and had taken precautions, by sending me out of the way, to prevent my committing any excess in my anger. From that instant I felt that I was capable of pardoning him.

Occupied with these thoughts, I arrived at the foot of the mountain. The country was solitary and secure, and in a short time I beheld the shepherd at a distance crossing the plain. I hastened to meet him. He had obtained nothing. He had found the father plunged in the deepest distress. He had read the letter with violent emotion, and then calming himself with a sudden exertion, he had replied coldly, "My daughter has been dishonoured by those wretches: let her be returned without ransom, or let her die!"

I shuddered at this reply. I knew, according to the laws of our troop, her death was inevitable. Our oaths required it. I felt, nevertheless, that not having been able to have her to myself, I could become her executioner!

The robber again paused with agitation. I sat musing upon his last frightful words, which proved to what excess the passions may be carried when escaped from all moral restraint. There was a horrible verity in this story that reminded me of some of the tragic fictions of Dante.

We now come to a fatal moment, resumed the bandit. After the report of the shepherd, I returned with him, and the chieftain received from his lips the refusal of the father. At a signal, which we all understood, we followed him to some distance from the victim. He there pronounced her sentence of death. Every one stood ready to execute his order, but I interfered. I observed that there was something due to pity as well as to justice. That I was as ready as any one to approve the implacable law,

which was to serve as a warning to all those who hesitated to pay the ransoms demanded for our prisoners; but that though the sacrifice was proper, it ought to be made without cruelty. The night is approaching, continued I; she will soon be wrapped in sleep; let her then be despatched. All I now claim on the score of former fondness for her is, let me strike the blow. I will do it as surely, but more tenderly than another. Several raised their voices against my proposition, but the captain imposed silence on them. He told me I might conduct her into a thicket at some distance, and he relied upon my promise.

I hastened to seize upon my prey. There was a forlorn kind of triumph at having at length become her exclusive possessor. I bore her off into the thickness of the forest. She remained in the same state of insensibility or stupor. I was thankful that she did not recollect me, for had she once murmured my name, I should have been overcome. She slept at length in the arms of him who was to poniard her.

Many were the conflicts I underwent before I could bring myself to strike the blow. But my heart had become sore by the recent conflicts it had undergone, and I dreaded lest, by procrastination, some other should become her executioner. When her repose had continued for some time, I separated myself gently from her, that I might not disturb her sleep, and seizing suddenly my poniard, plunged it into her bosom. A painful and concentrated murmur, but without any convulsive movement, accompanied her last sigh.—So perished this unfortunate!

He ceased to speak. I sat, horror-struck, covering my face with my hands, seeking, as it were, to hide from myself the frightful images he had presented to my mind. I was roused from this silence by the voice of the captain: "You sleep," said he, "and it is time to be off. Come, we must abandon this height, as night is setting in, and the messenger is not returned. I will post some one on the mountain-edge to

conduct him to the place where we shall pass the night."

This was no agreeable news to me. I was sick at heart with the dismal story I had heard. I was harassed and fatigued, and the sight of the banditti began to grow insupportable to me.

The captain assembled his comrades. We rapidly descended the forest which we had mounted with so much difficulty in the morning, and soon arrived in what appeared to be a frequented road. The robbers proceeded with great caution, carrying their guns cocked, and looking on every side with wary and suspicious eyes. They were apprehensive of encountering the civic patrole. We left Rocca Priori behind us. There was a fountain near by, and as I was excessively thirsty, I begged permission to stop and drink. The captain himself went and brought me water in his hat. We pursued our route, when, at the extremity of an alley which crossed the road, I perceived a female on horse-back, dressed in white. She was alone. I re-

collected the fate of the poor girl in the story, and trembled for her safety.

One of the brigands saw her at the same instant, and plunging into the bushes, he ran precipitately in the direction towards her. Stopping on the border of the alley, he put one knee to the ground, presented his carbine ready to menace her, or to shoot her horse if she attempted to fly, and in this way awaited her approach. I kept my eyes fixed on her with intense anxiety. I felt tempted to shout and warn her of her danger, though my own destruction would have been the consequence. It was awful to see this tiger crouching ready for a bound, and the poor innocent victim wandering unconsciously near him. Nothing but a mere chance could save her. To my joy the chance turned in her favour. She seemed almost accidentally to take an opposite path, which led outside of the wood, where the robber dared not venture. To this casual deviation she owed her safety.

I could not imagine why the captain of the

band had ventured to such a distance from the height on which he had placed the centinel to watch the return of the messenger. He seemed himself uneasy at the risk to which he exposed himself. His movements were rapid and uneasy; I could scarce keep pace with him. At length, after three hours of what might be termed a forced march, we mounted the extremity of the same woods, the summit of which we had occupied during the day; and I learnt with satisfaction that we had reached our quarters for the night. "You must be fatigued," said the chieftain; "but it was necessary to survey the environs, so as not to be surprised during the night. Had we met with the famous civic guard of Rocca Priori, you would have seen fine sport." Such was the indefatigable precaution and forethought of this robber chief, who really gave continual evidences of military talent.

The night was magnificent. The moon rising above the horizon in a cloudless sky, faintly lit up the grand features of the mountain; while

lights twinkling here and there, like terrestrial stars, in the wide dusky expanse of the landscape, betrayed the lonely cabins of the shepherds. Exhausted by fatigue, and by the many agitations I had experienced, I prepared to sleep, soothed by the hope of approaching deliverance. The captain ordered his companions to collect some dry moss: he arranged with his own hands a kind of mattress and pillow of it, and gave me his ample mantle as a covering. I could not but feel both surprised and gratified by such unexpected attentions on the part of this benevolent cut-throat; for there is nothing more striking than to find the ordinary charities, which are matters of course in common life, flourishing by the side of such stern and sterile crime. It is like finding the tender flowers and fresh herbage of the valley growing among the rocks and cinders of the volcano.

Before I fell asleep I had some further discourse with the captain, who seemed to feel great confidence in me. He referred to our previous conversation of the morning; told me

he was weary of his hazardous profession; that he had acquired sufficient property, and was anxious to return to the world, and lead a peaceful life in the bosom of his family. He wished to know whether it was not in my power to procure for him a passport for the United States of America. I applauded his good intentions, and promised to do every thing in my power to promote its success. We then parted for the night. I stretched myself upon my couch of moss, which, after my fatigues, felt like a bed of down; and, sheltered by the robber-mantle from all humidity, I slept soundly, without waking, until the signal to arise.

It was nearly six o'clock, and the day was just dawning. As the place where we had passed the night was too much exposed, we moved up into the thickness of the woods. A fire was kindled. While there was any flame, the mantles were again extended round it; but when nothing remained but glowing cinders, they were lowered, and the robbers seated themselves in a circle.

The scene before me reminded me of some of

those described by Homer. There wanted only the victim on the coals, and the sacred knife to cut off the succulent parts, and distribute them around. My companions might have rivalled the grim warriors of Greece. In place of the noble repasts, however, of Achilles and Agamemnon, I beheld displayed on the grass the remains of the ham which had sustained so vigorous an attack on the preceding evening, accompanied by the reliques of the bread, cheese, and wine. We had scarcely commenced our frugal breakfast, when I heard again an imitation of the bleating of sheep, similar to what I had heard the day before. The captain answered it in the same tone. Two men were soon after seen descending from the woody height, where we had passed the preceding evening. On nearer approach, they proved to be the centinel and the messenger. The captain rose, and went to meet them. He made a signal for his comrades to join him. They had a short conference, and then returning to me with eagerness, "Your ransom is paid," said he; "you are free!"

Though I had anticipated deliverance, I can-

not tell you what a rush of delight these tidings gave me. I cared not to finish my repast, but prepared to depart. The captain took me by the hand, requested permission to write to me, and begged me not to forget the passport. I replied, that I hoped to be of effectual service to him, and that I relied on his honour to return the prince's note for five hundred dollars, now that the cash was paid. He regarded me for a moment with surprise, then seeming to recollect himself, "*E giusto*," said he, "*eccolo—adio* * !" He delivered me the note, pressed my hand once more, and we separated. The labourers were permitted to follow me, and we resumed, with joy, our road towards Tusculum.

The Frenchman ceased to speak. The party continued, for a few moments, to pace the shore in silence. The story had made a deep impression, particularly on the Venetian lady. At that part which related to the young girl of

* It is just—there it is—adieu!

Frosinone, she was violently affected. Sobs broke from her; she clung closer to her husband, and as she looked up to him as for protection, the moon-beams shining on her beautifully fair countenance, showed it paler than usual, while tears glittered in her fine dark eyes.

"*Corragio, mia vita!*" said he, as he gently and fondly tapped the white hand that lay upon his arm.

The party now returned to the inn, and separated for the night. The fair Venetian, though of the sweetest temperament, was half out of humour with the Englishman for a certain slowness of faith which he had evinced throughout the whole evening. She could not understand this dislike to "humbug," as he termed it, which held a kind of sway over him, and seemed to control his opinions and his very actions.

"I'll warrant," said she to her husband, as they retired for the night, "I'll warrant, with all his affected indifference, this Englishman's heart would quake at the very sight of a bandit."

Her husband gently, and good-humouredly, checked her.

"I have no patience with these Englishmen," said she, as she got into bed—"they are so cold and insensible!"

THE ADVENTURE OF THE ENGLISHMAN.

In the morning all was bustle in the inn at Terracina. The procaccio had departed at daybreak on its route towards Rome, but the Englishman was yet to start, and the departure of an English equipage is always enough to keep an inn in a bustle. On this occasion there was more than usual stir, for the Englishman, having much property about him, and having been convinced of the real danger of the road, had applied to the police, and obtained, by dint of liberal pay, an escort of eight dragoons and twelve foot soldiers, as far as Fondi. Perhaps, too, there might have been a little ostentation at bottom, though, to say the truth, he had nothing of it in his manner. He moved about, taciturn and reserved as usual, among the gaping

crowd; gave laconic orders to John, as he packed away the thousand and one indispensable conveniencies of the night; double loaded his pistols with great *sang froid*, and deposited them in the pockets of the carriage, taking no notice of a pair of keen eyes gazing on him from among the herd of loitering idlers.

The fair Venetian now came up with a request, made in her dulcet tones, that he would permit their carriage to proceed under protection of his escort. The Englishman, who was busy loading another pair of pistols for his servant, and held the ramrod between his teeth, nodded assent, as a matter of course, but without lifting up his eyes. The fair Venetian was a little piqued at what she supposed indifference:—"O Dio!" ejaculated she softly as she retired, "Quanto sono insensibili questi Inglesi."

At length, off they set in gallant style. The eight dragoons prancing in front, the twelve foot soldiers marching in rear, and the carriage moving slowly in the centre to enable the in-

fantry to keep pace with them. They had proceeded but a few hundred yards, when it was discovered that some indispensable article had been left behind. In fact, the Englishman's purse was missing, and John was despatched to the inn to search for it. This occasioned a little delay, and the carriage of the Venetians drove slowly on. John came back out of breath and out of humour. The purse was not to be found. His master was irritated: he recollected the very place where it lay: he had not a doubt that the Italian servant had pocketed it. John was again sent back. He returned once more without the purse, but with the landlord and the whole household at his heels. A thousand ejaculations and protestations, accompanied by all sorts of grimaces and contortion—"No purse had been seen—his eccellenza must be mistaken."

"No—his eccellenza was not mistaken—the purse lay on the marble table, under the mirror, a green purse, half full of gold and silver." Again

a thousand grimaces and contortions, and vows by San Gennaro, that no purse of the kind had been seen.

The Englishman became furious. "The waiter had pocketed it—the landlord was a knave—the inn a den of thieves—it was a vile country—he had been cheated and plundered from one end of it to the other—but he'd have satisfaction—he'd drive right off to the police."

He was on the point of ordering the postilions to turn back, when, on rising, he displaced the cushion of the carriage, and the purse of money fell chinking to the floor.

All the blood in his body seemed to rush into his face—"Curse the purse," said he, as he snatched it up. He dashed a handful of money on the ground before the pale cringing waiter—"There—be off!" cried he. "John, order the postilions to drive on."

Above half an hour had been exhausted in this altercation. The Venetian carriage had loitered along; its passengers looking out from time to time, and expecting the escort every

moment to follow. They had gradually turned an angle of the road that shut them out of sight. The little army was again in motion, and made a very picturesque appearance as it wound along at the bottom of the rocks; the morning sunshine beaming upon the weapons of the soldiery.

The Englishman lolled back in his carriage, vexed with himself at what had passed, and consequently out of humour with all the world. As this, however, is no uncommon case with gentlemen who travel for their pleasure, it is hardly worthy of remark. They had wound up from the coast among the hills, and came to a part of the road that admitted of some prospect ahead.

"I see nothing of the lady's carriage, sir," said John, leaning down from the coach-box.

"Pish!" said the Englishman, testily—"don't plague me about the lady's carriage; must I be continually pestered with the concerns of strangers?" John said not another word, for he understood his master's mood.

The road grew more wild and lonely; they were slowly proceeding on a foot pace up a hill; the dragoons were some distance ahead, and had just reached the summit of the hill, when they uttered an exclamation, or rather shout, and galloped forward. The Englishman was roused from his sulky reverie.—He stretched his head from the carriage, which had attained the brow of the hill. Before him extended a long hollow defile, commanded on one side by rugged precipitous heights, covered with bushes and scanty forest. At some distance he beheld the carriage of the Venetians overturned; a numerous gang of desperadoes were rifling it; the young man and his servant were overpowered, and partly stripped, and the lady was in the hands of two of the ruffians. The Englishman seized his pistols, sprung from the carriage, and called upon John to follow him.

In the mean time, as the dragoons came forward, the robbers, who were busy with the carriage, quitted their spoil, formed themselves in the middle of the road, and taking a deliberate

aim, fired. One of the dragoons fell, another was wounded, and the whole were for a moment checked and thrown in confusion. The robbers loaded again in an instant. The dragoons discharged their carbines, but without apparent effect. They received another volley, which, though none fell, threw them again into confusion. The robbers were loading a second time, when they saw the foot soldiers at hand.—"*Scampa via!*" was the word: they abandoned their prey, and retreated up the rocks, the soldiers after them. They fought from cliff to cliff, and bush to bush, the robbers turning every now and then to fire upon their pursuers; the soldiers scrambling after them, and discharging their muskets whenever they could get a chance. Sometimes a soldier or a robber was shot down, and came tumbling among the cliffs. The dragoons kept firing from below, whenever a robber came in sight.

The Englishman had hastened to the scene of action, and the balls discharged at the dragoons had whistled past him as he advanced.

One object, however, engrossed his attention. It was the beautiful Venetian lady in the hands of two of the robbers, who, during the confusion of the fight, carried her shrieking up the mountain. He saw her dress gleaming among the bushes, and he sprang up the rocks to intercept the robbers, as they bore off their prey. The ruggedness of the steep, and the entanglements of the bushes, delayed and impeded him. He lost sight of the lady, but was still guided by her cries, which grew fainter and fainter. They were off to the left, while the reports of muskets showed that the battle was raging to the right. At length he came upon what appeared to be a rugged footpath, faintly worn in a gully of the rocks, and beheld the ruffians at some distance hurrying the lady up the defile. One of them hearing his approach, let go his prey, advanced towards him, and levelling the carbine, which had been slung on his back, fired. The ball whizzed through the Englishman's hat, and carried with it some of his hair. He returned the fire with one of his

pistols, and the robber fell. The other brigand now dropped the lady, and drawing a long pistol from his belt, fired on his adversary with deliberate aim. The ball passed between his left arm and his side, slightly wounding the arm. The Englishman advanced, and discharged his remaining pistol, which wounded the robber, but not severely.

The brigand drew a stiletto and rushed upon his adversary, who eluded the blow, receiving merely a slight wound, and defended himself with his pistol, which had a spring bayonet. They closed with one another, and a desperate struggle ensued. The robber was a square-built, thick-set man, powerful, muscular, and active. The Englishman, though of larger frame and greater strength, was less active and less accustomed to athletic exercises and feats of hardihood, but he showed himself practised and skilled in the arts of defence. They were on a craggy height, and the Englishman perceived that his antagonist was striving to press him to the edge. A side-glance showed him also the robber whom

he had first wounded, scrambling up to the assistance of his comrade, stiletto in hand. He had in fact attained the summit of the cliff, he was within a few steps, and the Englishman felt that his case was desperate, when he heard suddenly the report of a pistol, and the ruffian fell. The shot came from John, who had arrived just in time to save his master.

The remaining robber, exhausted by loss of blood and the violence of the contest, showed signs of faltering. The Englishman pursued his advantage, pressed on him, and as his strength relaxed, dashed him headlong from the precipice. He looked after him, and saw him lying motionless among the rocks below.

The Englishman now sought the fair Venetian. He found her senseless on the ground. With his servant's assistance he bore her down to the road, where her husband was raving like one distracted. He had sought her in vain, and had given her over for lost; and when he beheld her thus brought back in safety, his joy was equally wild and ungovernable. He would have caught

her insensible form to his bosom had not the Englishman restrained him. The latter, now really aroused, displayed a true tenderness and manly gallantry which one would not have expected from his habitual phlegm. His kindness, however, was practical, not wasted in words. He despatched John to the carriage for restoratives of all kinds, and, totally thoughtless of himself, was anxious only about his lovely charge. The occasional discharge of fire-arms along the height showed that a retreating fight was still kept up by the robbers. The lady gave signs of reviving animation. The Englishman, eager to get her from this place of danger, conveyed her to his own carriage, and, committing her to the care of her husband, ordered the dragoons to escort them to Fondi. The Venetian would have insisted on the Englishman's getting into the carriage; but the latter refused. He poured forth a torrent of thanks and benedictions; but the Englishman beckoned to the postillions to drive on.

John now dressed his master's wounds, which

were found not to be serious, though he was faint with loss of blood. The Venetian carriage had been righted, and the baggage replaced; and, getting into it, they set out on their way towards Fondi, leaving the foot-soldiers still engaged in ferreting out the banditti.

Before arriving at Fondi, the fair Venetian had completely recovered from her swoon. She made the usual question—

"Where was she?"

"In the Englishman's carriage."

"How had she escaped from the robbers?"

"The Englishman had rescued her."

Her transports were unbounded; and mingled with them were enthusiastic ejaculations of gratitude to her deliverer. A thousand times did she reproach herself for having accused him of coldness and insensibility. The moment she saw him she rushed into his arms with the vivacity of her nation, and hung about his neck in a speechless transport of gratitude. Never was man more embarrassed by the embraces of a fine woman.

"Tut!—tut!" said the Englishman.

"You are wounded!" shrieked the fair Venetian, as she saw blood upon his clothes.

"Pooh! nothing at all!"

"My deliverer!—my angel!" exclaimed she, clasping him again round the neck, and sobbing on his bosom.

"Pish!" said the Englishman, with a good-humoured tone, but looking somewhat foolish, "this is all humbug."

The fair Venetian, however, has never since accused the English of insensibility.

PART IV.

THE

MONEY-DIGGERS.

Found among the Papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker.

"Now I remember those old woman's words
Who in my youth would tell me winter's tales:
And speak of spirits and ghosts that glide by night
About the place where treasure hath been hid."

MARLOW'S JEW OF MALTA.

HELL-GATE.

About six miles from the renowned city of the Manhattoes, in that sound or arm of the sea which passes between the main land and Nassau, or Long Island, there is a narrow strait, where the current is violently compressed between shouldering promontories, and horribly perplexed by rocks and shoals. Being, at the best of times, a very violent, impetuous current, it takes these impediments in mighty dudgeon; boiling in whirlpools; brawling and fretting in ripples; raging and roaring in rapids and breakers; and, in short, indulging in all kinds of wrongheaded paroxysms. At such times, woe to any unlucky vessel that ventures within its clutches.

This termagant humour, however, prevails only at certain times of tide. At low water, for instance, it is as pacific a stream as you would wish to see; but as the tide rises, it begins to fret; at half-tide it roars with might and main, like a bully bellowing for more drink; but when the tide is full, it relapses into quiet, and, for a time, sleeps as soundly as an alderman after dinner. In fact, it may be compared to a quarrelsome toper, who is a peaceable fellow enough when he has no liquor at all, or when he has a skinfull, but who, when half-seas-over, plays the very devil.

This mighty blustering, bullying, hard-drinking little strait, was a place of great danger and perplexity to the Dutch navigators of ancient days; hectoring their tub-built barks in a most unruly style; whirling them about in a manner to make any but a Dutchman giddy, and not unfrequently stranding them upon rocks and reefs, as it did the famous squadron of Oloffe the Dreamer, when seeking a place to found the city of the Manhattoes. Whereupon,

out of sheer spleen, they denominated it *Helle-gat,* and solemnly gave it over to the devil. This appellation has since been aptly rendered into English by the name of Hell-gate, and into nonsense by the name of *Hurl*-gate, according to certain foreign intruders, who neither understood Dutch nor English—may St. Nicholas confound them!

This strait of Hell-gate was a place of great awe and perilous enterprise to me in my boyhood; having been much of a navigator on those small seas, and having more than once run the risk of shipwreck and drowning in the course of certain holiday voyages, to which, in common with other Dutch urchins, I was rather prone. Indeed, partly from the name, and partly from various strange circumstances connected with it, this place had far more terrors in the eyes of my truant companions and myself than had Scylla and Charybdis for the navigators of yore.

In the midst of this strait, and hard by a group of rocks called the Hen and Chickens,

there lay the wreck of a vessel which had been entangled in the whirlpools and stranded during a storm. There was a wild story told to us of this being the wreck of a pirate, and some tale of bloody murder which I cannot now recollect, but which made us regard it with great awe, and keep far from it in our cruisings. Indeed, the desolate look of the forlorn hulk, and the fearful place where it lay rotting, were enough to awaken strange notions. A row of timber-heads, blackened by time, just peered above the surface at high water; but at low tide a considerable part of the hull was bare, and its great ribs or timbers partly stripped of their planks and dripping with sea-weeds, looked like the huge skeleton of some sea-monster. There was also the stump of a mast, with a few ropes and blocks swinging about and whistling in the wind, while the sea-gull wheeled and screamed around the melancholy carcass. I have a faint recollection of some hobgoblin tale of sailors, ghosts being seen about this wreck at night, with bare sculls, and blue lights in their sockets

instead of eyes, but I have forgotten all the particulars.

In fact, the whole of this neighbourhood was, like the straits of Pylorus of yore, a region of fable and romance to me. From the strait to the Manhattoes the borders of the sound are greatly diversified, being broken and indented by rocky nooks overhung with trees, which give them a wild and romantic look. In the time of my boyhood they abounded with traditions about pirates, ghosts, smugglers, and buried money; which had a wonderful effect upon the young minds of my companions and myself.

As I grew to more mature years, I made diligent research after the truth of these strange traditions; for I have always been a curious investigator of the valuable but obscure branches of the history of my native province. I found infinite difficulty, however, in arriving at any precise information. In seeking to dig up one fact, it is incredible the number of fables which I unearthed. I will say nothing of the devil's

stepping-stones, by which the arch fiend made his retreat from Connecticut to Long Island, across the Sound; seeing the subject is likely to be learnedly treated by a worthy friend and contemporary historian, whom I have furnished with particulars thereof*. Neither will I say any thing of the black man in a three-cornered hat, seated in the stern of a jolly-boat, who used to be seen about Hell-gate in stormy weather, and who went by the name of the pirate's *spuke* (i. e. pirate's ghost), and whom, it is said, old Governor Stuyvesant once shot with a silver bullet; because I never could meet with any person of stanch credibility who professed to have seen this spectrum, unless it were the widow of Manus Conklen, the blacksmith, of Frogsneck; but then, poor woman, she was a little purblind, and might have been mistaken;

* For a very interesting and authentic account of the devil and his stepping-stones, see the valuable Memoir read before the New York Historical Society, since the death of Mr. Knickerbocker, by his friend, an eminent jurist of the place.

though they say she saw further than other folks in the dark.

All this, however, was but little satisfactory in regard to the tales of pirates and their buried money, about which I was most curious; and the following is all that I could for a long time collect that had any thing like an air of authenticity.

KIDD THE PIRATE.

In old times, just after the territory of the New Netherlands had been wrested from the hands of their High Mightinesses, the Lords States General of Holland, by King Charles the Second, and while it was as yet in an unquiet state, the province was a great resort of random adventurers, loose livers, and all that class of haphazard fellows who live by their wits, and dislike the old-fashioned restraint of law and gospel. Among these, the foremost were the Buccaneers. These were rovers of the deep, who, perhaps, in time of war had been educated in those schools of piracy, the privateers; but having once tasted the sweets of plunder, had ever retained a hankering after it. There is but a slight step from the pri-

vateersman to the pirate; both fight for the love of plunder; only that the latter is the bravest, as he dares both the enemy and the gallows.

But in whatever school they had been taught, the Buccaneers who kept about the English colonies were daring fellows, and made sad work in times of peace among the Spanish settlements and Spanish merchantmen. The easy access to the harbour of the Manhattoes; the number of hiding-places about its waters, and the laxity of its scarcely organized government, made it a great rendezvous of the pirates; where they might dispose of their booty, and concert new depredations. As they brought home with them wealthy lading of all kinds, the luxuries of the tropics, and the sumptuous spoils of the Spanish provinces, and disposed of them with the proverbial carelessness of freebooters, they were welcome visitors to the thrifty traders of the Manhattoes. Crews of these desperadoes, therefore, the runagates of every country and every clime, might be seen swaggering in open day about the streets of the

little burgh, elbowing its quiet mynheers; trafficking away their rich outlandish plunder at half or quarter price to the wary merchant, and then squandering their prize-money in taverns; drinking, gambling, singing, swearing, shouting, and astounding the neighbourhood with midnight brawl and ruffian revelry.

At length these excesses rose to such a height as to become a scandal to the provinces, and to call loudly for the interposition of government. Measures were accordingly taken to put a stop to the widely-extended evil, and to ferret this vermin brood out of the colonies.

Among the agents employed to execute this purpose was the notorious Captain Kidd. He had long been an equivocal character; one of those nondescript animals of the ocean that are neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. He was somewhat of a trader, something more of a smuggler, with a considerable dash of the pickaroon. He had traded for many years among the pirates, in a little rakish, musquito-built vessel, that could run into all kinds of waters. He

knew all their haunts and lurking-places; was always hooking about on mysterious voyages; and as busy as a Mother Cary's chicken in a storm.

This nondescript personage was pitched upon by government as the very man to hunt the pirates by sea, upon the good old maxim of "setting a rogue to catch a rogue;" or as otters are sometimes used to catch their cousins-german, the fish.

Kidd accordingly sailed for New York, in 1695, in a gallant vessel called the Adventure Galley, well armed and duly commissioned. On arriving at his old haunts, however, he shipped his crew on new terms; enlisted a number of his old comrades, lads of the knife and the pistol, and then set sail for the East. Instead of cruising against pirates, he turned pirate himself; steered to the Madeiras, to Bonavista, and Madagascar, and cruised about the entrance of the Red Sea. Here, among other maritime robberies, he captured a rich Quedah merchantman, manned by Moors, though commanded by

an Englishman. Kidd would fain have passed this off for a worthy exploit, as being a kind of crusade against the infidels; but government had long since lost all relish for such Christian triumphs.

After roaming the seas, trafficking his prizes, and changing from ship to ship, Kidd had the hardihood to return to Boston, laden with booty, with a crew of swaggering companions at his heels.

Times, however, had changed. The buccaneers could no longer show a whisker in the colonies with impunity. The new governor, Lord Bellamont, had signalized himself by his zeal in extirpating these offenders; and was doubly exasperated against Kidd, having been instrumental in appointing him to the trust which he had betrayed. No sooner, therefore, did he show himself in Boston, than the alarm was given of his re-appearance, and measures were taken to arrest this cut-purse of the ocean. The daring character which Kidd had acquired, however, and the desperate fellows who fol-

lowed like bull-dogs at his heels, caused a little delay in his arrest. He took advantage of this, it is said, to bury the greater part of his treasures, and then carried a high head about the streets of Boston. He even attempted to defend himself when arrested, but was secured and thrown into prison, with his followers. Such was the formidable character of this pirate and his crew, that it was thought advisable to despatch a frigate to bring them to England. Great exertions were made to screen him from justice, but in vain; he and his comrades were tried, condemned, and hanged at Execution Dock, in London. Kidd died hard, for the rope with which he was first tied up broke with his weight, and he tumbled to the ground. He was tied up a second time, and more effectually; from hence came, doubtless, the story of Kidd's having a charmed life, and that he had to be twice hanged.

Such is the main outline of Kidd's history; but it has given birth to an innumerable progeny of traditions.' The report of his having

buried great treasures of gold and jewels before his arrest set the brains of all the good people along the coast in a ferment. There were rumours on rumours of great sums of money found here and there, sometimes in one part of the country, sometimes in another; of coins with Moorish inscriptions, doubtless the spoils of his eastern prizes, but which the common people looked upon with superstitious awe, regarding the Moorish letters as diabolical or magical characters.

Some reported the treasure to have been buried in solitary, unsettled places about Plymouth and Cape Cod; but by degrees various other parts, not only on the eastern coast, but along the shores of the Sound, and even of Manhattan and Long Island, were gilded by these rumours. In fact, the rigorous measures of Lord Bellamont had spread sudden consternation among the buccaneers in every part of the provinces: they had secreted their money and jewels in lonely out-of-the-way places, about the wild shores of the rivers and sea-coast, and dis-

persed themselves over the face of the country. The hand of justice prevented many of them from ever returning to regain their buried treasures, which remained, and remain probably to this day, objects of enterprise for the money-digger.

This is the cause of those frequent reports of trees and rocks bearing mysterious marks, supposed to indicate the spots where treasure lay hidden; and many have been the ransackings after the pirates' booty. In all the stories which once abounded of these enterprises, the devil played a conspicuous part. Either he was conciliated by ceremonies and invocations, or some solemn compact was made with him. Still he was ever prone to play the money-diggers some slippery trick. Some would dig so far as to come to an iron chest, when some baffling circumstance was sure to take place. Either the earth would fall in and fill up the pit, or some direful noise or apparition would frighten the party from the place; and sometimes the devil himself would appear, and bear off the prize when within their very grasp; and if they revisited

the place the next day, not a trace would be found of their labours of the preceding night.

All these rumours, however, were extremely vague, and for a long time tantalized without gratifying my curiosity. There is nothing in this world so hard to get at as truth, and there is nothing in this world but truth that I care for. I sought among all my favourite sources of authentic information, the oldest inhabitants, and particularly the old Dutch wives of the province; but though I flatter myself that I am better versed than most men in the curious history of my native province, yet for a long time my inquiries were unattended with any substantial result.

At length it happened that, one calm day in the latter part of summer, I was relaxing myself from the toils of severe study, by a day's amusement in fishing in those waters which had been the favourite resort of my boyhood. I was in company with several worthy burghers of my native city, among whom were more than one illustrious member of the corporation, whose

names, did I dare to mention them, would do honour to my humble page. Our sport was indifferent. The fish did not bite freely, and we frequently changed our fishing-ground without bettering our luck. We were at length anchored close under a ledge of rocky coast, on the eastern side of the Island of Manhatta. It was a still, warm day. The stream whirled and dimpled by us, without a wave or even a ripple; and every thing was so calm and quiet, that it was almost startling when the kingfisher would pitch himself from the branch of some dry tree, and after suspending himself for a moment in the air to take his aim, would souse into the smooth water after his prey. While we were lolling in our boat, half drowsy with the warm stillness of the day and the dulness of our sport, one of our party, a worthy alderman, was overtaken by a slumber, and as he dosed, suffered the sinker of his drop-line to lie upon the bottom of the river. On waking, he found he had caught something of importance, from the weight. On drawing it to the surface,

we were much surprised to find it a long pistol of very curious and outlandish fashion, which, from its rusted condition, and its stock being worm-eaten and covered with barnacles, appeared to have lain a long time under water. The unexpected appearance of this document of warfare occasioned much speculation among my pacific companions. One supposed it to have fallen there during the revolutionary war; another, from the peculiarity of its fashion, attributed it to the voyagers in the earliest days of the settlement; perchance to the renowned Adrian Block, who explored the Sound, and discovered Block Island, since so noted for its cheese. But a third, after regarding it for some time, pronounced it to be of veritable Spanish workmanship.

"I 'll warrant," said he, "if this pistol could talk, it would tell strange stories of hard fights among the Spanish Dons. I 've no doubt but it is a relique of the buccaneers of old times — who knows but it belonged to Kidd himself?"

"Ah! that Kidd was a resolute fellow,"

cried an old iron-faced Cape Cod whaler.—"There's a fine old song about him, all to the tune of—

> My name is Captain Kidd,
> As I sailed, as I sailed—

And then it tells all about how he gained the Devil's good graces by burying the Bible:

> I had the Bible in my hand,
> As I sailed, as I sailed,
> And I buried it in the sand
> As I sailed.—

"Odsfish, if I thought this pistol had belonged to Kidd, I should set great store by it, for curiosity's sake. By the way, I recollect a story about a fellow who once dug up Kidd's buried money, which was written by a neighbour of mine, and which I learnt by heart. As the fish don't bite just now, I'll tell it to you, by way of passing away the time."—And so saying, he gave us the following narration.

THE DEVIL AND TOM WALKER.

A FEW miles from Boston, in Massachusetts, there is a deep inlet winding several miles into the interior of the country from Charles Bay, and terminating in a thickly wooded swamp or morass. On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove; on the opposite side the land rises abruptly from the water's edge into a high ridge, on which grew a few scattered oaks of great age and immense size. Under one of these gigantic trees, according to old stories, there was a great amount of treasure buried by Kidd the pirate. The inlet allowed a facility to bring the money in a boat secretly and at night to the very foot of the hill; the elevation of the place permitted a good look-out to be kept that no one was at hand; while the remarkable trees formed good

land-marks by which the place might easily be found again. The old stories add, moreover, that the devil presided at the hiding of the money, and took it under his guardianship; but this it is well known he always does with buried treasure, particularly when it has been ill-gotten. Be that as it may, Kidd never returned to recover his wealth; being shortly after seized at Boston, sent out to England, and there hanged for a pirate.

About the year 1727, just at the time that earthquakes were prevalent in New England, and shook many tall sinners down upon their knees, there lived near this place a meagre, miserly fellow of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself; they were so miserly that they even conspired to cheat each other. Whatever the woman could lay hands on, she hid away; a hen could not cackle but she was on the alert to secure the new-laid egg. Her husband was continually prying about to detect her secret hoards, and many and fierce were the conflicts that took place about

what ought to have been common property. They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone, and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin-trees, emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney; no traveller stopped at its door. A miserable horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron, stalked about a field where a thin carpet of moss scarcely covering the ragged beds of pudding-stone, tantalized and balked his hunger; and sometimes he would lean his head over the fence, look piteously at the passer-by, and seem to petition deliverance from this land of famine.

The house and its intimates had altogether a bad name. Tom's wife was a tall termagant, fierce of temper, loud of tongue, and strong of arm. Her voice was often heard in wordy warfare with her husband; and his face sometimes showed signs that their conflicts were not confined to words. No one ventured, however, to interfere between them. The lonely wayfarer shrunk within himself at the horrid clamour and

clapper-clawing; eyed the den of discord askance, and hurried on his way, rejoicing, if a bachelor, in his celibacy.

One day that Tom Walker had been to a distant part of the neighbourhood, he took what he considered a short cut homewards, through the swamp. Like most short cuts, it was an ill-chosen route. The swamp was thickly grown with great gloomy pines and hemlocks, some of them ninety feet high, which made it dark at noonday, and a retreat for all the owls of the neighbourhood. It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveller into a gulf of black, smothering mud; there were also dark and stagnant pools, the abodes of the tadpole, the bull-frog, and the watersnake; where the trunks of pines and hemlocks lay half drowned, half rotting, looking like alligators sleeping in the mire.

Tom had long been picking his way cautiously through this treacherous forest; stepping from tuft to tuft of rushes and roots,

which afforded precarious footholds among deep sloughs; or pacing carefully, like a cat, along the prostrate trunks of trees; startled now and then by the sudden screaming of the bittern, or the quacking of a wild duck, rising on the wing from some solitary pool. At length he arrived at a piece of firm ground, which ran out like a peninsula into the deep bosom of the swamp. It had been one of the strong holds of the Indians during their wars with the first colonists. Here they had thrown up a kind of fort which they had looked upon as almost impregnable, and had used as a place of refuge for their squaws and children. Nothing remained of the old Indian fort but a few embankments, gradually sinking to the level of the surrounding earth, and already overgrown in part by oaks and other forest trees, the foliage of which formed a contrast to the dark pines and hemlocks of the swamp.

It was late in the dusk of evening when Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused therefore awhile to rest himself. Any one but

he would have felt unwilling to linger in this lonely, melancholy place, for the common people had a bad opinion of it, from the stories handed down from the time of the Indian wars; when it was asserted that the savages held incantations here, and made sacrifices to the evil spirit.

Tom Walker, however, was not a man to be troubled with any fears of the kind. He reposed himself for some time on the trunk of a fallen hemlock, listening to the boding cry of the tree toad, and delving with his walking staff into a mound of black mould at his feet. As he turned up the soil unconsciously, his staff struck against something hard. He raked it out of the vegetable mould, and lo! a cloven scull, with an Indian tomahawk buried deep in it, lay before him. The rust on the weapon showed the time that had elapsed since this death-blow had been given. It was a dreary memento of the fierce struggle that had taken place in this last foothold of the Indian warriors.

"Humph!" said Tom Walker, as he gave the scull a kick to shake the dirt from it.

"Let that scull alone!" said a gruff voice. Tom lifted up his eyes, and beheld a great black man seated directly opposite him, on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither heard nor seen any one approach; and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither negro nor Indian. It is true he was dressed in a rude half Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body; but his face was neither black nor copper-colour, but swarthy and dingy, and begrimed with soot, as if he had been accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had a shock of coarse black hair, that stood out from his head in all directions; and bore an axe on his shoulder.

He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

"What are you doing on my grounds?" said the black man, with a hoarse growling voice.

"Your grounds!" said Tom with a sneer, "no more your grounds than mine; they belong to Deacon Peabody."

"Deacon Peabody be d——d," said the stranger, "as I flatter myself he will be, if he does not look more to his own sins and less to those of his neighbours. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring."

Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was scored the name of Deacon Peabody, an eminent man, who had waxed wealthy by driving shrewd bargains with the Indians. He now looked round, and found most of the tall trees marked with the name of some great man of the colony, and all more or less scored by the axe. The one on which he had been seated, and which had evidently just been hewn down, bore the name of Crowninshield; and he recollected a mighty rich man of that name, who made a vulgar display of wealth, which it was whispered he had acquired by buccaneering.

"He's just ready for burning!" said the black man, with a growl of triumph. "You see I am likely to have a good stock of fire-wood for winter."

"But what right have you," said Tom, "to cut down Deacon Peabody's timber?"

"The right of a prior claim," said the other. "This woodland belonged to me long before one of your white-faced race put foot upon the soil."

"And pray, who are you, if I may be so bold?" said Tom.

"Oh, I go by various names. I am the wild huntsman in some countries; the black miner in others. In this neighbourhood I am known by the name of the black woodsman. I am he to whom the red men consecrated this spot, and in honour of whom they now and then roasted a white man, by way of sweet-smelling sacrifice. Since the red men have been exterminated by you white savages, I amuse myself by presiding at the persecutions of quakers and anabaptists: I am the great patron and prompter of slave dealers, and the grand master of the Salem witches."

"The upshot of all which is, that, if I mistake not," said Tom, sturdily, "you are he commonly called old Scratch."

"The same, at your service!" replied the black man, with a half civil nod.

Such was the opening of this interview, according to the old story; though it has almost too familiar an air to be credited. One would think that to meet with such a singular personage, in this wild, lonely place, would have shaken any man's nerves; but Tom was a hard-minded fellow, not easily daunted, and he had lived so long with a termagant wife, that he did not even fear the devil.

It is said that after this commencement they had a long and earnest conversation together, as Tom returned homewards. The black man told him of great sums of money which had been buried by Kidd the pirate, under the oak trees on the high ridge, not far from the morass. All these were under his command, and protected by his power, so that none could find them but such as propitiated his favour. These he offered to

place within Tom Walker's reach, having conceived an especial kindness for him; but they were to be had only on certain conditions. What these conditions were may easily be surmised, though Tom never disclosed them publicly. They must have been very hard, for he required time to think of them, and he was not a man to stick at trifles where money was in view. When they had reached the edge of the swamp, the stranger paused—"What proof have I that all you have been telling me is true?" said Tom. "There is my signature," said the black man, pressing his finger on Tom's forehead. So saying he turned off among the thickets of the swamp, and seemed, as Tom said, to go down, down, down, into the earth, until nothing but his head and shoulders could be seen, and so on, until he totally disappeared.

When Tom reached home, he found the black print of a finger, burnt, as it were, into his forehead, which nothing could obliterate.

The first news his wife had to tell him was the sudden death of Absalom Crowninshield,

the rich buccaneer. It was announced in the papers with the usual flourish, that "A great man had fallen in Israel."

Tom recollected the tree which his black friend had just hewn down, and which was ready for burning. "Let the freebooter roast," said Tom, "who cares!" He now felt convinced that all he had heard and seen was no illusion.

He was not prone to let his wife into his confidence, but as this was an uneasy secret, he willingly shared it with her. All her avarice was awakened at the mention of hidden gold, and she urged her husband to comply with the black man's terms, and secure what would make them wealthy for life. However Tom might have felt disposed to sell himself to the Devil, he was determined not to do so to oblige his wife; so he flatly refused, out of the mere spirit of contradiction. Many and bitter were the quarrels they had on the subject, but the more she talked, the more resolute was Tom not to be damned to please her.

At length she determined to drive the bargain on her own account, and if she succeeded, to keep all the gain to herself. Being of the same fearless temper as her husband, she set off for the old Indian fort towards the close of a summer's day. She was many hours absent. When she came back, she was reserved and sullen in her replies. She spoke something of a black man, whom she had met about twilight, hewing at the root of a tall tree. He was sulky, however, and would not come to terms: she was to go again with a propitiatory offering, but what it was she forbore to say.

The next evening she sat off again for the swamp, with her apron heavily laden. Tom waited and waited for her, but in vain; midnight came, but she did not make her appearance: morning, noon, night returned, but still she did not come. Tom now grew uneasy for her safety, especially as he found she had carried off in her apron the silver teapot and spoons, and every portable article of value. An-

other night elapsed, another morning came; but no wife. In a word, she was never heard of more.

What was her real fate nobody knows, in consequence of so many pretending to know. It is one of those facts which have become confounded by a variety of historians. Some asserted that she lost her way among the tangled mazes of the swamp, and sunk into some pit or slough: others, more uncharitable, hinted that she had eloped with the household booty, and made off to some other province; while others assert that the tempter had decoyed her into a dismal quagmire, on top of which her hat was found lying. In confirmation of this, it was said a great black man, with an axe on his shoulder, was seen late that very evening coming out of the swamp, carrying a bundle tied in a check apron, with an air of surly triumph.

The most current and probable story, however, observes that Tom Walker grew so anxious about the fate of his wife and his property, that he set out at length to seek them both at the In-

dian fort. During a long summer's afternoon he searched about the gloomy place, but no wife was to be seen. He called her name repeatedly, but she was nowhere to be heard. The bittern alone responded to his voice, as he flew screaming by; or the bull-frog croaked dolefully from a neighbouring pool. At length, it is said, just in the brown hour of twilight, when the owls began to hoot, and the bats to flit about, his attention was attracted by the clamour of carrion crows, that were hovering about a cypress tree. He looked up, and beheld a bundle tied in a check apron, and hanging in the branches of the tree, with a great vulture perched hard by, as if keeping watch upon it. He leaped with joy; for he recognized his wife's apron, and supposed it to contain the household valuables.

"Let us get hold of the property," said he, consolingly to himself, "and we will endeavour to do without the woman."

As he scrambled up the tree, the vulture spread its wide wings, and sailed off screaming into the deep shadows of the forest. Tom seized

the check apron, but, woful sight! found nothing but a heart and liver tied up in it!

Such, according to the most authentic old story, was all that was to be found of Tom's wife. She had probably attempted to deal with the black man as she had been accustomed to deal with her husband; but though a female scold is generally considered a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it. She must have died game, however; for it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet deeply stamped about the tree, and found handsful of hair, that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodman. Tom knew his wife's prowess by experience. He shrugged his shoulders, as he looked at the signs of a fierce clapper-clawing. "Egad," said he to himself, "old Scratch must have had a tough time of it!"

Tom consoled himself for the loss of his property, with the loss of his wife, for he was a man of fortitude. He even felt something like gratitude towards the black woodman, who,

he considered, had done him a kindness. He sought, therefore, to cultivate a further acquaintance with him, but for some time without success: the old black legs played shy, for whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for calling for: he knows how to play his cards when pretty sure of his game.

At length, it is said, when delay had whetted Tom's eagerness to the quick, and prepared him to agree to any thing rather than not gain the promised treasure, he met the black man one evening, in his usual woodman's dress, with his axe on his shoulder, sauntering along the edge of the swamp, and humming a tune. He affected to receive Tom's advances with great indifference, made brief replies, and went on humming his tune.

By degrees, however, Tom brought him to business, and they began to haggle about the terms on which the former was to have the pirate's treasure. There was one condition which need not be mentioned, being generally understood in all cases where the devil grants favours;

but there were others about which, though of less importance, he was inflexibly obstinate. He insisted that the money found through his means should be employed in his service. He proposed, therefore, that Tom should employ it in the black traffic; that is to say, that he should fit out a slave ship. This, however, Tom resolutely refused: he was bad enough in all conscience; but the devil himself could not tempt him to turn slave dealer.

Finding Tom so squeamish on this point, he did not insist upon it, but proposed instead, that he should turn usurer; the devil being extremely anxious for the increase of usurers, looking upon them as his peculiar people.

To this no objections were made, for it was just to Tom's taste.

"You shall open a broker's shop in Boston next month," said the black man.

"I'll do it to-morrow, if you wish," said Tom Walker.

"You shall lend money at two per cent. a month."

"Egad, I'll charge four!" replied Tom Walker.

"You shall extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive the merchant to bankruptcy—"

"I'll drive him to the d—l," cried Tom Walker, eagerly.

"You are the usurer, for my money!" said the black legs, with delight.—"When will you want the rhino?"

"This very night."

"Done!" said the devil.

"Done!" said Tom Walker.—So they shook hands, and struck a bargain.

A few days' time saw Tom Walker seated behind his desk in a counting-house in Boston. His reputation for a ready moneyed man, who would lend money out for a good consideration, soon spread abroad. Every body remembers the time of Governor Belcher, when money was particularly scarce. It was a time of paper credit. The country had been deluged with government bills: the famous Land Bank had been established: there had been a rage for speculating: the people had run mad with schemes for new

settlements; for building cities in the wilderness; land-jobbers went about with maps of grants, and townships, and El Dorados, lying nobody knew where, but which every body was ready to purchase. In a word, the great speculating fever which breaks out every now and then in the country had raged to an alarming degree, and every body was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing. As usual, the fever had subsided; the dream had gone off, and the imaginary fortunes with it; the patients were left in doleful plight, and the whole country resounded with the consequent cry of "hard times."

At this propitious time of public distress did Tom Walker set up as a usurer in Boston. His door was soon thronged by customers. The needy and the adventurous; the gambling speculator; the dreaming land-jobber; the thriftless tradesman; the merchant with cracked credit; in short, every one driven to raise money by desperate means and desperate sacrifices hurried to Tom Walker.

Thus Tom was the universal friend of the needy; and he acted like a "friend in need;" that is to say, he always exacted good pay and good security. In proportion to the distress of the applicant was the hardness of his terms. He accumulated bonds and mortgages; gradually squeezed his customers closer and closer, and sent them at length dry as a sponge from his door.

In this way he made money hand over hand; became a rich and mighty man, and exalted his cocked hat upon 'Change. He built himself, as usual, a vast house out of ostentation, but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished out of parsimony. He even set up a carriage in the fulness of his vain glory, though he nearly starved the horses which drew it; and as the ungreased wheels groaned and screeched on the axletrees, you would have thought you heard the souls of the poor debtors he was squeezing.

As Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful. Having secured the good things of this world, he began to feel anxious about those of

the next. He thought with regret on the bargain he had made with his black friend, and set his wits to work to cheat him out of the conditions. He became, therefore, all of a sudden a violent church-goer. He prayed loudly and strenuously, as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week by the clamour of his Sunday devotion. The quiet Christians, who had been modestly and steadfastly travelling Zionward, were struck with self-reproach at seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped in their career by this new-made convert. Tom was as rigid in religious as in money matters; he was a stern supervisor and censurer of his neighbours, and seemed to think every sin entered up to their account became a credit on his own side of the page. He even talked of the expediency of reviving the persecution of Quakers and Anabaptists. In a word, Tom's zeal became as notorious as his riches.

Still, in spite of all this strenuous attention to forms, Tom had a lurking dread that the devil,

after all, would have his due. That he might not be taken unawares, therefore, it is said he always carried a small Bible in his coat pocket. He had also a great folio Bible on his counting-house desk, and would frequently be found reading it when people called on business. On such occasions he would lay his green spectacles in the book to mark the place, while he turned round to drive some usurious bargain.

Some say that Tom grew a little crack-brained in his old days, and that fancying his end approaching, he had his horse new shod, saddled and bridled, and buried with his feet uppermost; because he supposed that, at the last day, the world would be turned upside down; in which case he should find his horse standing ready for mounting, and he was determined at the worst to give his old friend a run for it. This, however, is probably a mere old wives' fable.

If he really did take such a precaution, it was totally superfluous; at least so says the authentic old legend, which closes his story in the following manner.

On one hot afternoon in the dog-days, just as a terrible black thunder-gust was coming up, Tom sat in his counting-house, in his white linen cap and India silk morning gown. He was on the point of foreclosing a mortgage, by which he would complete the ruin of an unlucky land speculator for whom he had professed the greatest friendship,

The poor land-jobber begged him to grant a few months' indulgence. Tom had grown testy and irritated, and refused another day.

"My family will be ruined, and brought upon the parish," said the land-jobber.

"Charity begins at home," replied Tom. "I must take care of myself in these hard times."

"You have made so much money out of me!" said the speculator.

Tom lost his patience and his piety.

"The d—l take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing."

Just then there were three loud knocks at the street-door. He stepped out to see who was

there. A black man was holding a black horse, which neighed and stamped with impatience.

"Tom, you're come for!" said the black fellow, gruffly. Tom shrunk back, but too late. He had left his little Bible at the bottom of his coat pocket, and his big Bible on the desk, buried under the mortgage he was about to foreclose: never was sinner taken more unawares. The black man whisked him like a child into the saddle, gave the horse a lash, and away he galloped, with Tom on his back, in the midst of the thunder-storm. The clerks stuck their pens behind their ears, and stared after him from the windows. Away went Tom Walker, dashing down the streets, his white cap bobbing up and down, his morning gown fluttering in the wind, and his steed striking fire out of the pavement at every bound. When the clerks turned to look for the black man, he had disappeared.

Tom Walker never returned to foreclose the mortgage. A countryman, who lived on the border of the swamp, reported, that in the height

of the thunder-gust he had heard a great clattering of hoofs and a howling along the road, and that when he ran to the window he just caught sight of a figure such as I have described, on a horse that galloped like mad across the fields, over the hills, and down into the black hemlock swamp, towards the old Indian fort; and that shortly after a thunderbolt fell in that direction, which seemed to set the whole forest in a blaze.

The good people of Boston shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders; but had been so much accustomed to witches and goblins, and tricks of the Devil in all kind of shapes from the first settlement of the colony, that they were not so much horror-struck as might have been expected. Trustees were appointed to take charge of Tom's effects. There was nothing, however, to administer upon. On searching his coffers, all his bonds and mortgages were found reduced to cinders. In place of gold and silver, his iron chest was filled with chips and shavings; two skeletons lay in his stable instead of his half-

starved horses; and the very next day his great house took fire, and was burnt to the ground.

Such was the end of Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let all griping money-brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak trees, from whence he dug Kidd's money, is to be seen to this day; and the neighbouring swamp and old Indian fort are often haunted in stormy nights by a figure on horseback, in morning-gown and white cap, which is, doubtless, the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact, the story has resolved itself into a proverb, and is the origin of that popular saying, so prevalent throughout New England, of "The Devil and Tom Walker."

Such, as nearly as I can recollect, was the purport of the tale told by the Cape-Cod whaler. There were divers trivial particulars which I have omitted, and which whiled away the morn-

ing very pleasantly until the time of tide favourable to fishing being passed, it was proposed that we should go to land and refresh ourselves under the trees, until the noon-tide heat should have abated.

We accordingly landed on a delectable part of the island of Mannahata, in that shady and embowered tract formerly under the dominion of the ancient family of the Hardenbrooks. It was a spot well known to me in the course of the aquatic expeditions of my boyhood. Not far from where we landed there was an old Dutch family vault, constructed in the side of a bank, which had been an object of great awe and fable among my school-boy associates. We had peeped into it during one of our coasting voyages, and had been startled by the sight of mouldering coffins, and musty bones within; but what had given it the most fearful interest in our eyes, was its being in some way connected with the pirate wreck which lay rotting among the rocks of Hell-gate. There were stories, also, of smuggling connected with it; particularly re-

lating to a time when this retired spot was owned by a noted burgher, called Ready-money Provost; a man, of whom it was whispered, that he had many and mysterious dealings with parts beyond seas. All these things, however, had been jumbled together in our minds in that vague way in which such themes are mingled up in the tales of boyhood.

While I was pondering upon these matters, my companions had spread a repast from the contents of our well-stored pannier, under a broad chestnut on the green sward, which swept down to the water's edge—Here we solaced ourselves on the cool grassy carpet during the warm sunny hours of midday. While lolling on the grass, indulging in that kind of musing reverie of which I am fond, I summoned up the dusky recollections of my boyhood respecting this place, and repeated them, like the imperfectly remembered traces of a dream, for the amusement of my companions. When I had finished, a worthy old burgher, John Josse Vandermoere, the same who once related to me the adventures

of Dolph Heyliger, broke silence, and observed, that he recollected a story of money-digging, which occurred in this very neighbourhood, and might account for some of the traditions which I had heard in my boyhood. As we knew him to be one of the most authentic narrators in the province, we begged him to let us have the particulars, and accordingly, while we solaced ourselves with a clean long pipe of Blase Moore's best tobacco, the authentic John Josse Vandermoere related the following tale.

WOLFERT WEBBER,

OR

GOLDEN DREAMS.

In the year of grace, one thousand seven hundred and—blank—for I do not remember the precise date; however, it was somewhere in the early part of the last century, there lived in the ancient city of the Manhattoes a worthy burgher, Wolfert Webber by name. He was descended from old Cobus Webber of the Brille in Holland, one of the original settlers, famous for introducing the cultivation of cabbages, and who came over to the province during the protectorship of Oloffe Van Kortlandt, otherwise called the Dreamer.

The field in which Cobus Webber first planted himself and his cabbages had remained

ever since in the family, who continued in the same line of husbandry, with that praiseworthy perseverance for which our Dutch burghers are noted. The whole family-genius, during several generations, was devoted to the study and development of this one noble vegetable, and to this concentration of intellect may, doubtless, be ascribed the prodigious size and renown to which the Webber cabbages attained.

The Webber dynasty continued in uninterrupted succession; and never did a line give more unquestionable proofs of legitimacy. The eldest son succeeded to the looks as well as the territory of his sire; and had the portraits of this line of tranquil potentates been taken, they would have presented a row of heads marvellously resembling, in shape and magnitude, the vegetables over which they reigned.

The seat of government continued unchanged in the family-mansion, a Dutch-built house, with a front, or rather gable-end, of yellow brick, tapering to a point, with the customary iron weathercock at the top. Every thing

about the building bore the air of long settled ease and security. Flights of martins peopled the little coops nailed against its walls, and swallows built their nests under the eaves; and every one knows that these house-loving birds bring good luck to the dwelling where they take up their abode. In a bright sunny morning, in early summer, it was delectable to hear their cheerful notes as they sported about in the pure sweet air, chirping forth, as it were, the greatness and prosperity of the Webbers.

Thus quietly and comfortably did this excellent family vegetate under the shade of a mighty button-wood tree, which, by little and little, grew so great, as entirely to overshadow their palace. The city gradually spread its suburbs round their domain. Houses sprang up to interrupt their prospects; the rural lanes in the vicinity began to grow into the bustle and populousness of streets; in short, with all the habits of rustic life, they began to find themselves the inhabitants of a city. Still, however, they maintained their hereditary character and

hereditary possessions with all the tenacity of petty German princes in the midst of the empire. Wolfert was the last of the line, and succeeded to the patriarchal bench at the door, under the family-tree, and swayed the sceptre of his fathers, a kind of rural potentate in the midst of a metropolis.

To share the cares and sweets of sovereignty, he had taken unto himself a helpmate, one of that excellent kind called stirring women, that is to say, she was one of those notable little housewives who are always busy when there is nothing to do. Her activity, however, took one particular direction: her whole life seemed devoted to intense knitting; whether at home or abroad, walking or sitting, her needles were continually in motion; and it is even affirmed that, by her unwearied industry, she very nearly supplied her household with stockings throughout the year. This worthy couple were blessed with one daughter, who was brought up with great tenderness and care; uncommon pains had been taken with her education, so that she

could stitch in every variety of way; make all kinds of pickles and preserves, and mark her own name on a sampler. The influence of her taste was seen, also, in the family-garden, where the ornamental began to mingle with the useful; whole rows of fiery marigolds and splendid hollyhocks bordered the cabbage-beds, and gigantic sun-flowers lolled their broad jolly faces over the fences, seeming to ogle most affectionately the passers by.

Thus reigned and vegetated Wolfert Webber over his paternal acres, peacefully and contentedly. Not but that, like all other sovereigns, he had his occasional cares and vexations. The growth of his native city sometimes caused him annoyance. His little territory gradually became hemmed in by streets and houses, which intercepted air and sunshine. He was now and then subjected to the irruptions of the border population that infest the skirts of a metropolis; who would sometimes make midnight forays into his dominions, and carry off captive whole platoons of his noblest subjects. Vagrant swine

would make a descent, too, now and then, when the gate was left open, and lay all waste before them; and mischievous urchins would often decapitate the illustrious sun-flowers, the glory of the garden, as they lolled their heads so fondly over the walls. Still all these were petty grievances, which might now and then ruffle the surface of his mind, as a summer breeze will ruffle the surface of a mill-pond, but they could not disturb the deep-seated quiet of his soul. He would but seize a trusty staff that stood behind the door, issue suddenly out, and anoint the back of the aggressor, whether pig or urchin, and then return within doors, marvellously refreshed and tranquillized.

The chief cause of anxiety to honest Wolfert, however, was the growing prosperity of the city. The expenses of living doubled and trebled; but he could not double and treble the magnitude of his cabbages; and the number of competitors prevented the increase of price: thus, therefore, while every one around him grew richer, Wolfert grew poorer; and he could

not, for the life of him, perceive how the evil was to be remedied.

This growing care, which increased from day to day, had its gradual effect upon our worthy burgher; insomuch, that it at length implanted two or three wrinkles in his brow; things unknown before in the family of the Webbers; and it seemed to pinch up the corners of his cocked hat into an expression of anxiety totally opposite to the tranquil, broad-brimmed, low-crowned beavers of his illustrious progenitors.

Perhaps even this would not have materially disturbed the serenity of his mind had he had only himself and his wife to care for; but there was his daughter gradually growing to maturity; and all the world knows when daughters begin to ripen, no fruit nor flower requires so much looking after. I have no talent at describing female charms, else fain would I depict the progress of this little Dutch beauty. How her blue eyes grew deeper and deeper, and her cherry lips redder and redder; and how she ripened and ripened; and rounded and

rounded, in the opening breath of sixteen summers; until in her seventeenth spring she seemed ready to burst out of her bodice like a half-blown rose-bud.

Ah, well-a-day! could I but show her as she was then, tricked out on a Sunday morning in the hereditary finery of the old Dutch clothes-press, of which her mother had confided to her the key. The wedding-dress of her grand-mother modernized for use, with sundry ornaments, handed down as heir looms in the family; her pale brown hair, smoothed with buttermilk in flat waving lines, on each side of her fair forehead; the chain of yellow virgin gold that encircled her neck; the little cross that just rested at the entrance of a soft valley of happiness, as if it would sanctify the place; the— but, pooh—it is not for an old man like me to be prosing about female beauty. Suffice it to say, Amy had attained her seventeenth year. Long since had her sampler exhibited hearts in couples, desperately transfixed with arrows, and true lovers' knots, worked in deep blue silk;

and it was evident she began to languish for some more interesting occupation than the rearing of sunflowers, or pickling of cucumbers.

At this critical period of female existence, when the heart within a damsel's bosom, like its emblem, the miniature which hangs without, is apt to be engrossed by a single image, a new visitor began to make his appearance under the roof of Wolfert Webber. This was Dirk Waldron, the only son of a poor widow; but who could boast of more fathers than any lad in the province; for his mother had had four husbands, and this only child; so that, though born in her last wedlock, he might fairly claim to be the tardy fruit of a long course of cultivation. This son of four fathers united the merits and the vigour of his sires. If he had not had a great family before him, he seemed likely to have a great one after him; for you had only to look at the fresh bucksome youth to see that he was formed to be the founder of a mighty race.

This youngster gradually became an intimate

visitor of the family. He talked little, but he sat long. He filled the father's pipe when it was empty; gathered up the mother's knitting needle or ball of worsted, when it fell to the ground; stroked the sleek coat of the tortoise-shell cat, and replenished the teapot for the daughter, from the bright copper kettle that sang before the fire. All these quiet little offices may seem of trifling import; but when true love is translated into Low Dutch, it is in this way that it eloquently expresses itself. They were not lost upon the Webber family. The winning youngster found marvellous favour in the eyes of the mother; the tortoise-shell cat, albeit the most staid and demure of her kind, gave indubitable signs of approbation of his visits; the tea-kettle seemed to sing out a cheery note of welcome at his approach; and if the shy glances of the daughter might be rightly read, as she sat bridling, and dimpling, and sewing by her mother's side, she was not a whit behind Dame Webber, or grimalkin, or the tea-kettle in good-will.

Wolfert alone saw nothing of what was going on; profoundly wrapped up in meditation on the growth of the city, and his cabbages, he sat looking in the fire and puffing his pipe in silence. One night, however, as the gentle Amy, according to custom, lighted her lover to the outer door, and he, according to custom, took his parting salute, the smack resounded so vigorously through the long, silent entry, as to startle even the dull ear of Wolfert. He was slowly roused to a new source of anxiety. It had never entered into his head, that this mere child, who, as it seemed, but the other day, had been climbing about his knees, and playing with dolls and baby-houses, could, all at once, be thinking of lovers and matrimony. He rubbed his eyes; examined into the fact; and really found, that while he had been dreaming of other matters, she had actually grown to be a woman, and what was worse, had fallen in love. Here arose new cares for poor Wolfert. He was a kind father; but he was a prudent man. The young man was a lively, stirring

lad; but then he had neither money nor land. Wolfert's ideas all ran in one channel; and he saw no alternative, in case of a marriage, but to portion off the young couple with a corner of his cabbage-garden, the whole of which was barely sufficient for the support of his family.

Like a prudent father, therefore, he determined to nip this passion in the bud, and forbade the youngster the house, though sorely did it go against his fatherly heart, and many a silent tear did it cause in the bright eye of his daughter. She showed herself, however, a pattern of filial piety and obedience. She never pouted and sulked; she never flew in the face of parental authority; she never fell into a passion, or fell into hysterics, as many romantic novel-read young ladies would do. Not she, indeed! She was none such heroical rebellious trumpery, I'll warrant you. On the contrary, she acquiesced like an obedient daughter; shut the street-door in her lover's face; and if ever she did grant him an interview, it was either

out of the kitchen window, or over the garden fence.

Wolfert was deeply cogitating these matters in his mind, and his brow wrinkled with unusual care, as he wended his way one Saturday afternoon to a rural inn, about two miles from the city. It was a favourite resort of the Dutch part of the community, from being always held by a Dutch line of landlords, and retaining an air and relish of the good old times. It was a Dutch-built house, that had probably been a country-seat of some opulent burgher in the early time of the settlement. It stood near a point of land called Corlear's Hook, which stretches out into the Sound, and against which the tide, at its flux and reflux, sets with extraordinary rapidity. The venerable and somewhat crazy mansion was distinguished from afar by a grove of elms and sycamores, that seemed to wave a hospitable invitation, while a few weeping willows, with their dank, drooping foliage, resembling falling waters, gave an idea

of coolness that rendered it an attractive spot during the heats of summer. Here, therefore, as I said, resorted many of the old inhabitants of the Manhattan, where, while some played at shuffle-board, and quoits, and nine-pins, others smoked a deliberate pipe, and talked over public affairs.

It was on a blustering autumnal afternoon that Wolfert made his visit to the inn. The grove of elms and willows was stripped of its leaves, which whirled in rustling eddies about the fields. The nine-pin alley was deserted, for the premature chilliness of the day had driven the company within doors. As it was Saturday afternoon, the habitual club was in session, composed, principally, of regular Dutch burghers, though mingled occasionally with persons of various character and country, as is natural in a place of such motley population.

Beside the fire-place, in a huge leather-bottomed arm-chair, sat the dictator of this little world, the venerable Ramm, or, as it was pronounced, Ramm Rapelye. He was a man of

Wallon race, and illustrious for the antiquity of his line, his great grandmother having been the first white child born in the province. But he was still more illustrious for his wealth and dignity: he had long filled the noble office of alderman, and was a man to whom the Governor himself took off his hat. He had maintained possession of the leather-bottomed chair from time immemorial; and had gradually waxed in bulk as he sat in this seat of government, until, in the course of years, he filled its whole magnitude. His word was decisive with his subjects; for he was so rich a man that he was never expected to support any opinion by argument. The landlord waited on him with peculiar officiousness, not that he paid better than his neighbours; but then the coin of a rich man seems always to be so much more acceptable. The landlord had ever a pleasant word and a joke to insinuate in the ear of the august Ramm. It is true, Ramm never laughed, and, indeed, maintained a mastiff-like gravity and even surliness of aspect, yet he now and then

rewarded mine host with a token of approbation; which, though nothing more nor less than a kind of grunt, yet delighted the landlord more than a broad laugh from a poorer man.

"This will be a rough night for the money-diggers," said mine host, as a gust of wind howled round the house and rattled at the windows.

"What! are they at their works again?" said an English half-pay captain, with one eye, who was a frequent attendant at the inn.

"Ay, are they," said the landlord, "and well may they be. They 've had luck of late. They say a great pot of money has been dug up in the field just behind Stuyvesant's Orchard. Folks think it must have been buried there in old times, by Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor."

"Fudge!" said the one-eyed man-of-war, as he added a small portion of water to a bottom of brandy.

"Well, you may believe or not, as you please," said mine host, somewhat nettled; "but every

body knows that the old governor buried a great deal of his money at the time of the Dutch troubles, when the English red-coats seized on the province. They say, too, the old gentleman walks; ay, and in the very same dress that he wears in the picture which hangs up in the family house."

"Fudge!" said the half-pay officer.

"Fudge, if you please! But didn't Corny Van Zandt see him at midnight, stalking about in the meadow with his wooden leg, and a drawn sword in his hand, that flashed like fire? And what can he be walking for, but because people have been troubling the place where he buried his money in old times?"

Here the landlord was interrupted by several guttural sounds from Ramm Rapelye, betokening that he was labouring with the unusual production of an idea. As he was too great a man to be slighted by a prudent publican, mine host respectfully paused until he should deliver himself. The corpulent frame of this mighty burgher now gave all the symptoms of a volcanic

mountain on the point of an eruption. First there was a certain heaving of the abdomen, not unlike an earthquake; then was emitted a cloud of tobacco-smoke from that crater, his mouth; then there was a kind of rattle in the throat, as if the idea were working its way up through a region of phlegm; then there were several disjointed members of a sentence thrown out, ending in a cough: at length his voice forced its way in the slow but absolute tone of a man who feels the weight of his purse, if not of his ideas: every portion of his speech being marked by a testy puff of tobacco-smoke.

"Who talks of old Peter Stuyvesant's walking?"—Puff—"Have people no respect for persons?"—Puff—puff—"Peter Stuyvesant knew better what to do with his money than to bury it."—Puff—"I know the Stuyvesant family."—Puff—"Every one of them."—Puff—"Not a more respectable family in the province."—Puff—"Old standers."—Puff—"Warm householders."—Puff—"None of your upstarts."—Puff—puff—puff—"Don't talk to me of Peter

Stuyvesant's walking."—Puff—puff—puff—puff.

Here the redoubtable Ramm contracted his brow, clasped up his mouth till it wrinkled at each corner, and redoubled his smoking with such vehemence, that the cloudy volumes soon wreathed round his head as the smoke envelops the awful summit of Mount Etna.

A general silence followed the sudden rebuke of this very rich man. The subject, however, was too interesting to be readily abandoned. The conversation soon broke forth again from the lips of Peechy Prauw Van Hook, the chronicler of the club, one of those prosy, narrative old men who seem to be troubled with an incontinence of words as they grow old.

Peechy could at any time tell as many stories in an evening as his hearers could digest in a month. He now resumed the conversation by affirming, that to his knowledge money had at different times been dug up in various parts of the island. The lucky persons who had discovered them had always dreamt of them three

times beforehand; and what was worthy of remark, those treasures had never been found but by some descendant of the good old Dutch families, which clearly proved that they had been buried by Dutchmen in the olden time.

"Fiddlestick with your Dutchmen!" cried the half-pay officer. "The Dutch had nothing to do with them. They were all buried by Kidd the pirate, and his crew."

Here a key-note was touched which roused the whole company. The name of Captain Kidd was like a talisman in those times, and was associated with a thousand marvellous stories. The half-pay officer took the lead, and in his narrations fathered upon Kidd all the plunderings and exploits of Morgan, Blackbeard, and the whole list of bloody buccaneers.

The officer was a man of great weight among the peaceable members of the club, by reason of his warlike character and gunpowder tales. All his golden stories of Kidd, however, and of the booty he had buried, were obstinately

rivalled by the tales of Peechy Prauw; who, rather than suffer his Dutch progenitors to be eclipsed by a foreign freebooter, enriched every field and shore in the neighbourhood with the hidden wealth of Peter Stuyvesant and his contemporaries.

Not a word of this conversation was lost upon Wolfert Webber. He returned pensively home, full of magnificent ideas. The soil of his native island seemed to be turned into gold-dust, and every field to teem with treasure. His head almost reeled at the thought how often he must have heedlessly rambled over places where countless sums lay scarcely covered by the turf beneath his feet. His mind was in an uproar with this whirl of new ideas. As he came in sight of the venerable mansion of his forefathers, and the little realm where the Webbers had so long and so contentedly flourished, his gorge rose at the narrowness of his destiny.

"Unlucky Wolfert!" exclaimed he. "Others

can go to bed and dream themselves into whole mines of wealth; they have but to seize a spade in the morning, and turn up doubloons like potatoes; but thou must dream of hardship and rise to poverty—must dig thy fields from year's end to year's end, and yet raise nothing but cabbages!"

Wolfert Webber went to bed with a heavy heart, and it was long before the golden visions that disturbed his brain permitted him to sink into repose. The same visions, however, extended into his sleeping thoughts, and assumed a more definite form. He dreamt that he had discovered an immense treasure in the centre of his garden. At every stroke of the spade he laid bare a golden ingot: diamond crosses sparkled out of the dust; bags of money turned up their bellies, corpulent with pieces of eight or venerable doubloons; and chests, wedged close with moidores, ducats, and pistareens, yawned before his ravished eyes, and vomited forth their glittering contents.

Wolfert awoke a poorer man than ever. He

had no heart to go about his daily concerns, which appeared so paltry and profitless, but sat all day long in the chimney-corner, picturing to himself ingots and heaps of gold in the fire.

The next night his dream was repeated. He was again in his garden, digging, and laying open stores of hidden wealth. There was something very singular in this repetition. He passed another day of reverie; and though it was cleaning day, and the house, as usual in Dutch households, completely topsy-turvy, yet he sat unmoved amidst the general uproar.

The third night he went to bed with a palpitating heart. He put on his red night-cap, wrong side outwards, for good luck. It was deep midnight before his anxious mind could settle itself into sleep. Again the golden dream was repeated, and again he saw his garden teeming with ingots and money-bags.

Wolfert rose the next morning in complete bewilderment. A dream, three times repeated, was never known to lie, and if so, his fortune was made. In his agitation, he put on his

waistcoat with the hind part before, and this was a corroboration of good luck. He no longer doubted that a huge store of money lay buried somewhere in his cabbage-field, coyly waiting to be sought for; and he repined at having so long been scratching about the surface of the soil instead of digging to the centre. He took his seat at the breakfast-table, full of these speculations; asked his daughter to put a lump of gold into his tea; and on handing his wife a plate of slap-jacks, begged her to help herself to a doubloon.

His grand care now was, how to secure this immense treasure without its being known. Instead of working regularly in his grounds in the day-time, he now stole from his bed at night, and, with spade and pickaxe, went to work to rip up and dig about his paternal acres from one end to the other. In a little time, the whole garden, which had presented such a goodly and regular appearance, with its phalanx of cabbages, like a vegetable army in battle array, was reduced to a scene of devastation;

while the relentless Wolfert, with night-cap on head, and lantern and spade in hand, stalked through the slaughtered ranks, the destroying angel of his own vegetable world.

Every morning bore testimony to the ravages of the preceding night, in cabbages of all ages and conditions, from the tender sprout to the full-grown head, piteously rooted from their quiet beds, like worthless weeds, and left to wither in the sunshine. It was in vain Wolfert's wife remonstrated; it was in vain his darling daughter wept over the destruction of some favourite marygold. "Thou shalt have gold of another guess sort," he would cry, chucking her under the chin. "Thou shalt have a string of crooked ducats for thy wedding necklace, my child!"

His family began really to fear that the poor man's wits were diseased. He muttered in his sleep at night about mines of wealth; about pearls, and diamonds, and bars of gold. In the day-time he was moody and abstracted, and walked about as if in a trance. Dame Webber

held frequent councils with all the old women of the neighbourhood. Scarce an hour in the day but a knot of them might be seen, wagging their white caps together round her door, while the poor woman made some piteous recital. The daughter, too, was fain to seek for more frequent consolation from the stolen interviews of her favoured swain, Dirk Waldron. The delectable little Dutch songs with which she used to dulcify the house grew less and less frequent; and she would forget her sewing, and look wistfully in her father's face as he sat pondering by the fireside. Wolfert caught her eye one day fixed on him thus anxiously, and for a moment was roused from his golden reveries. "Cheer up, my girl," said he, exultingly; "why dost thou droop? Thou shalt hold up thy head one day with the Brinkerhoffs and the Schermerhorns, the Van Hornes and the Van Dams—By St. Nicholas, but the Patroon himself shall be glad to get thee for his son!"

Amy shook her head at this vain-glorious

boast, and was more than ever in doubt of the soundness of the good man's intellect.

In the mean time, Wolfert went on digging and digging; but the field was extensive, and as his dream had indicated no precise spot, he had to dig at random. The winter set in before one-tenth of the scene of promise had been explored. The ground became frozen hard, and the nights too cold for the labours of the spade. No sooner, however, did the returning warmth of spring loosen the soil, and the small frogs begin to pipe in the meadows, but Wolfert resumed his labours with renovated zeal. Still, however, the hours of industry were reversed. Instead of working cheerily all day, planting and setting out his vegetables, he remained thoughtfully idle, until the shades of night summoned him to his secret labours. In this way he continued to dig, from night to night, and week to week, and month to month, but not a stiver did he find. On the contrary, the more he digged the poorer he grew. The rich

soil of his garden was digged away, and the sand and gravel from beneath were thrown to the surface, until the whole field presented an aspect of sandy barrenness.

In the mean time the seasons gradually rolled on. The little frogs which had piped in the meadows in early spring croaked as bull-frogs during the summer heats, and then sunk into silence. The peach-tree budded, blossomed, and bore its fruit. The swallows and martins came, twittered about the roof, built their nests, reared their young, held their congress along the eaves, and then winged their flight in search of another spring. The caterpillar spun its winding sheet, dangled in it from the great buttonwood tree before the house, turned into a moth, fluttered with the last sunshine of summer, and disappeared; and, finally, the leaves of the buttonwood tree turned yellow, then brown, then rustled one by one to the ground, and whirling about in little eddies of wind and dust, whispered that winter was at hand.

Wolfert gradually woke from his dream of

wealth as the year declined. He had reared no crop for the supply of his household during the sterility of winter. The season was long and severe, and, for the first time, the family was really straitened in its comforts. By degrees a revulsion of thought took place in Wolfert's mind, common to those whose golden dreams have been disturbed by pinching realities. The idea gradually stole upon him that he should come to want. He already considered himself one of the most unfortunate men in the province, having lost such an incalculable amount of undiscovered treasure; and now, when thousands of pounds had eluded his search, to be perplexed for shillings and pence was cruel in the extreme.

Haggard care gathered about his brow; he went about with a money-seeking air; his eyes bent downwards into the dust, and carrying his hands in his pockets, as men are apt to do when they have nothing else to put into them. He could not even pass the city almshouse without giving it a rueful glance, as if destined to be

his future abode. The strangeness of his conduct and of his looks occasioned much speculation and remark. For a long time he was suspected of being crazy, and then every body pitied him; at length it began to be suspected that he was poor, and then every body avoided him.

The rich old burghers of his acquaintance met him outside of the door when he called; entertained him hospitably on the threshold; pressed him warmly by the hand on parting; shook their heads as he walked away, with the kindhearted expression of "Poor Wolfert!" and turned a corner nimbly, if by chance they saw him approaching as they walked the streets. Even the barber and cobbler of the neighbourhood, and a tattered tailor in an alley hard by, three of the poorest and merriest rogues in the world, eyed him with that abundant sympathy which usually attends a lack of means; and there is not a doubt but their pockets would have been at his command, only that they happened to be empty.

Thus every body deserted the Webber mansion, as if poverty were contagious, like the plague; every body but honest Dick Waldron, who still kept up his stolen visits to the daughter, and, indeed, seemed to wax more affectionate as the fortunes of his mistress were in the wane.

Many months had elapsed since Wolfert had frequented his old resort, the rural inn. He was taking a long lonely walk one Saturday afternoon, musing over his wants and disappointments, when his feet took, instinctively, their wonted direction, and on awaking out of a reverie, he found himself before the door of the inn. For some moments he hesitated whether to enter, but his heart yearned for companionship; and where can a ruined man find better companionship than at a tavern, where there is neither sober example nor sober advice to put him out of countenance?

Wolfert found several of the old frequenters of the tavern at their usual posts, and seated in their usual places; but one was missing, the

great Ramm Rapelye, who for many years had filled the leather-bottomed chair of state. His place was supplied by a stranger, who seemed, however, completely at home in the chair and the tavern. He was rather under size, but deep-chested, square, and muscular. His broad shoulders, double joints, and bow knees, gave tokens of prodigious strength. His face was dark and weatherbeaten; a deep scar, as if from the slash of a cutlass, had almost divided his nose, and made a gash in his upper lip, through which his teeth shone like a bull-dog's. A mop of iron-grey hair gave a grizzly finish to his hard-favoured visage. His dress was of an amphibious character. He wore an old hat edged with tarnished lace, and cocked in martial style on one side of his head; a rusty blue military coat with brass buttons, and a wide pair of short petticoat trowsers, or rather breeches, for they were gathered up at the knees. He ordered every body about him with an authoritative air; talked in a brattling voice, that sounded like the crackling of thorns under

a pot; d——d the landlord and servants with perfect impunity; and was waited upon with greater obsequiousness than had ever been shown to the mighty Ramm himself.

Wolfert's curiosity was awakened to know who and what was this stranger, who had thus usurped absolute sway in this ancient domain. Peechy Prauw took him aside, into a remote corner of the hall, and there, in an under voice, and with great caution, imparted to him all that he knew on the subject. The inn had been aroused, several months before, on a dark stormy night, by repeated long shouts, that seemed like the howlings of a wolf. They came from the waterside; and at length were distinguished to be hailing the house in the seafaring manner—House-a-hoy! The landlord turned out with his head-waiter, tapster, ostler, and errand-boy, that is to say, with his old negro, Cuff. On approaching the place from whence the voice proceeded, they found this amphibious-looking personage at the water's edge, quite alone, and seated on a great oaken sea-chest. How he

came there; whether he had been set on shore from some boat, or had floated to land on his chest, nobody could tell, for he did not seem disposed to answer questions; and there was something in his looks and manners that put a stop to all questioning. Suffice it to say, he took possession of a corner room of the inn, to which his chest was removed with great difficulty. Here he had remained ever since, keeping about the inn and its vicinity; sometimes, it is true, he disappeared for one, two, or three days at a time, going and returning without giving any notice or account of his movements. He always appeared to have plenty of money, though often of very strange outlandish coinage; and he regularly paid his bill every evening before turning in. He had fitted up his room to his own fancy, having slung a hammock from the ceiling instead of a bed, and decorated the walls with rusty pistols and cutlasses of foreign workmanship. A great part of his time was passed in this room, seated by the window, which commanded a wide view of

the Sound, a short odd-fashioned pipe in his mouth, a glass of rum toddy at his elbow, and a pocket telescope in his hand, with which he reconnoitred every boat that moved upon the water. Large square-rigged vessels seemed to excite but little attention; but the moment he descried any thing with a shoulder-of-mutton sail, or that a barge, yawl, or jolly-boat hove in sight, up went the telescope, and he examined it with the most scrupulous attention.

All this might have passed without much notice, for in those times the province was so much the resort of adventurers of all characters and climes, that any oddity in dress or behaviour attracted but small attention. In a little while, however, this strange sea-monster, thus strangely cast upon dry land, began to encroach upon the long established customs and customers of the place, and to interfere, in a dictatorial manner, in the affairs of the ninepin-alley and the bar-room, until in the end he usurped an absolute command over the whole inn. It was all in vain to attempt to withstand his authority. He

was not exactly quarrelsome, but boisterous and peremptory, like one accustomed to tyrannize on a quarter-deck; and there was a dare-devil air about every thing he said and did, that inspired a wariness in all bystanders. Even the half-pay officer, so long the hero of the club, was soon silenced by him; and the quiet burghers stared with wonder at seeing their inflammable man of war so readily and quietly extinguished. And then the tales that he would tell were enough to make a peaceable man's hair stand on end. There was not a sea-fight, or marauding or freebooting adventure that had happened within the last twenty years, but he seemed perfectly versed in it. He delighted to talk of the exploits of the buccaneers in the West Indies and on the Spanish Main. How his eyes would glisten as he described the waylaying of treasure-ships; the desperate fights, yard arm and yard arm, broadside and broadside; the boarding and capturing of huge Spanish galleons! With what chuckling relish would he describe the descent upon some rich

Spanish colony; the rifling of a church; the sacking of a convent! You would have thought you heard some gormandizer dilating upon the roasting of a savoury goose at Michaelmas, as he described the roasting of some Spanish Don to make him discover his treasure—a detail given with a minuteness that made every rich old burgher present turn uncomfortably in his chair. All this would be told with infinite glee, as if he considered it an excellent joke; and then he would give such a tyrannical leer in the face of his next neighbour, that the poor man would be fain to laugh out of sheer faint-heartedness. If any one, however, pretended to contradict him in any of his stories, he was on fire in an instant. His very cocked hat assumed a momentary fierceness, and seemed to resent the contradiction. "How the devil should you know as well as I?—I tell you it was as I say;" and he would at the same time let slip a broadside of thundering oaths and tremendous sea-phrases, such as had never been heard before within these peaceful walls.

Indeed, the worthy burghers began to surmise that he knew more of these stories than mere hearsay. Day after day their conjectures concerning him grew more and more wild and fearful. The strangeness of his arrival, the strangeness of his manners, the mystery that surrounded him, all made him something incomprehensible in their eyes. He was a kind of monster of the deep to them—he was a merman—he was Behemoth—he was Leviathan—in short, they knew not what he was.

The domineering spirit of this boisterous sea-urchin at length grew quite intolerable. He was no respecter of persons; he contradicted the richest burghers without hesitation; he took possession of the sacred elbow-chair which, time out of mind, had been the seat of sovereignty of the illustrious Ramm Rapelye;—nay, he even went so far in one of his rough jocular moods, as to slap that mighty burgher on the back, drink his toddy, and wink in his face,—a thing scarcely to be believed. From this time

Ramm Rapelye appeared no more at the inn; and his example was followed by several of the most eminent customers, who were too rich to tolerate being bullied out of their opinions, or being obliged to laugh at another man's jokes. The landlord was almost in despair; but he knew not how to get rid of this sea-monster and his sea-chest, who seemed both to have grown like fixtures or excrescences on his establishment.

Such was the account whispered cautiously in Wolfert's ear by the narrator, Peechy Prauw, as he held him by the button in a corner of the hall, casting a wary glance now and then towards the door of the bar-room, lest he should be overheard by the terrible hero of his tale.

Wolfert took his seat in a remote part of the room in silence, impressed with profound awe of this unknown, so versed in freebooting history. It was to him a wonderful instance of the revolutions of mighty empires, to find the venerable Ramm Rapelye thus ousted from the throne, and a rugged tarpawling dictating from

his elbow-chair, hectoring the patriarchs, and filling this tranquil little realm with brawl and bravado.

The stranger was, on this evening, in a more than usually communicative mood, and was narrating a number of astounding stories of plunderings and burnings upon the high seas. He dwelt upon them with peculiar relish; heightening the frightful particulars in proportion to their effect on his peaceful auditors. He gave a long swaggering detail of the capture of a Spanish merchantman. She was lying becalmed during a long summer's day, just off from an island which was one of the lurking-places of the pirates. They had reconnoitred her with their spy-glasses from the shore, and ascertained her character and force. At night a picked crew of daring fellows set off for her in a whale-boat. They approached with muffled oars, as she lay rocking idly with the undulations of the sea, and her sails flapping against the masts. They were close under her stern before the guard on deck was aware

of their approach. The alarm was given; the pirates threw hand grenades on deck, and sprang up the main chains sword in hand. The crew flew to arms, but in great confusion; some were shot down, others took refuge in the tops, others were driven overboard and drowned, while others fought hand to hand from the main-deck to the quarter-deck, disputing gallantly every inch of ground. There were three Spanish gentlemen on board with their ladies, who made the most desperate resistance. They defended the companion-way, cut down several of their assailants, and fought like very devils, for they were maddened by the shrieks of the ladies from the cabin. One of the Dons was old, and soon despatched. The other two kept their ground vigorously, even though the captain of the pirates was among their assailants. Just then there was a shout of victory from the main-deck—"The ship is ours!" cried the pirates. One of the Dons immediately dropped his sword and surrendered; the other, who was a hot-headed youngster, and just married, gave

the captain a slash in the face that laid all open.

The captain just made out to articulate the words "no quarter!"

"And what did they do with the prisoners?" said Peechy Prauw eagerly.

"Threw them all overboard!" was the answer.

A dead pause followed this reply.

Peechy Prauw shrunk quietly back, like a man who had unwarily stolen upon the lair of a sleeping lion. The honest burghers cast fearful glances at the deep scar slashed across the visage of the stranger, and moved their chairs a little farther off. The seaman, however, smoked on, without moving a muscle, as though he either did not perceive, or did not regard, the unfavourable effect he had produced on his hearers.

The half-pay officer was the first to break the silence, for he was continually tempted to make ineffectual head against this tyrant of the

seas, and to regain his lost consequence in the eyes of his ancient companions. He now tried to match the gunpowder tales of the stranger by others equally tremendous. Kidd, as usual, was his hero, concerning whom he seemed to have picked up many of the floating traditions of the province. The seaman had always evinced a settled pique against the one-eyed warrior. On this occasion he listened with peculiar impatience. He sat with one arm a-kimbo, the other elbow on a table, the hand holding on to the small pipe he was pettishly puffing; his legs crossed; drumming with one foot on the ground, and casting every now and then the side glance of a basilisk at the prosing captain. At length the latter spoke of Kidd's having ascended the Hudson with some of his crew, to land his plunder in secrecy. "Kidd up the Hudson!" burst forth the seaman, with a tremendous oath—"Kidd never was up the Hudson!"

"I tell you he was," said the other. "Ay,

and they say he buried a quantity of treasure on the little flat that runs out into the river, called The Devil's Dans Kammer."

"The Devil's Dans Kammer in your teeth!" cried the seaman. "I tell you Kidd never was up the Hudson. What a plague do you know of Kidd and his haunts?"

"What do I know?" echoed the half-pay officer. "Why, I was in London at the time of his trial; ay, and I had the pleasure of seeing him hanged at Execution Dock."

"Then, sir, let me tell you, that you saw as pretty a fellow hanged as ever trod shoe-leather. Ay!" putting his face nearer to that of the officer, "and there was many a land-lubber looked on that might much better have swung in his stead."

The half-pay officer was silenced; but the indignation thus pent up in his bosom glowed with intense vehemence in his single eye, which kindled like a coal.

Peechy Prauw, who never could remain silent, observed that the gentleman certainly was in the

right. Kidd never did bury money up the Hudson, nor indeed in any of those parts, though many affirmed such to be the fact. It was Bradish and others of the buccaneers who had buried money; some said in Turtle Bay; others on Long Island; others in the neighbourhood of Hell-gate. Indeed, added he, I recollect an adventure of Sam, the negro fisherman, many years ago, which some think had something to do with the buccaneers. As we are all friends here, and as it will go no further, I'll tell it to you. "Upon a dark night, many years ago, as Black Sam was returning from fishing in Hell-gate——"

Here the story was nipped in the bud by a sudden movement from the unknown, who, laying his iron fist on the table, knuckles downward, with a quiet force that indented the very boards, and looking grimly over his shoulder, with the grin of an angry bear—

"Hark'ee, neighbour!" said he, with significant nodding of the head. "You'd better let the buccaneers and their money alone—they're

not for old men and old women to meddle with. They fought hard for their money; they gave body and soul for it; and wherever it lies buried, depend upon it he must have a tug with the devil who gets it!"

This sudden explosion was succeeded by a blank silence throughout the room; Peechy Prauw shrunk within himself, and even the one-eyed officer turned pale. Wolfert, who from a dark corner in the room had listened with intense eagerness to all this talk about buried treasure, looked with mingled awe and reverence at this bold buccaneer, for such he really suspected him to be. There was a chinking of gold and a sparkling of jewels in all his stories about the Spanish Main that gave a value to every period; and Wolfert would have given any thing for the rummaging of the ponderous sea-chest, which his imagination crammed full of golden chalices, crucifixes, and jolly round bags of doubloons.

The dead stillness that had fallen upon the company was at length interrupted by the

stranger, who pulled out a prodigious watch, of curious and ancient workmanship, and which, in Wolfert's eyes, had a decidedly Spanish look. On touching a spring, it struck ten o'clock; upon which the sailor called for his reckoning, and having paid it out of a handful of outlandish coin, he drank off the remainder of his beverage, and without taking leave of any one, rolled out of the room, muttering to himself, as he stumped up stairs to his chamber.

It was some time before the company could recover from the silence into which they had been thrown. The very footsteps of the stranger, which were heard now and then as he traversed his chamber, inspired awe. Still the conversation in which they had been engaged was too interesting not to be resumed. A heavy thunder-gust had gathered up unnoticed while they were lost in talk, and the torrents of rain that fell forbade all thoughts of setting off for home until the storm should subside. They drew nearer together, therefore, and entreated the worthy Peechy Prauw to con-

tinue the tale which had been so discourteously interrupted. He readily complied, whispering, however, in a tone scarcely above his breath, and drowned occasionally by the rolling of the thunder; and he would pause every now and then, and listen with evident awe, as he heard the heavy footsteps of the stranger pacing overhead. The following is the purport of his story.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE BLACK FISHERMAN.

EVERY body knows Black Sam, the old negro fisherman, or, as he is commonly called, Mud Sam, who has fished about the Sound for the last half century. It is now many, many years since Sam, who was then as active a young negro as any in the province, and worked on the farm of Killian Suydam, on Long Island, having finished his day's work at an early hour, was fishing, one still summer evening, just about the neighbourhood of Hell-gate.

He was in a light skiff, and being well acquainted with the currents and eddies, he had shifted his station, according to the shifting of the tide, from the Hen and Chickens to the

Hog's Back, from the Hog's Back to the Pot, and from the Pot to the Frying-pan; but in the eagerness of his sport he did not see that the tide was rapidly ebbing, until the roaring of the whirlpools and eddies warned him of his danger; and he had some difficulty in shooting his skiff from among the rocks and breakers, and getting to the point of Blackwell's Island. Here he cast anchor for some time, waiting the turn of the tide to enable him to return homewards. As the night set in, it grew blustering and gusty. Dark clouds came brindling up in the west, and now and then a growl of thunder, or a flash of lightning, told that a summer storm was at hand. Sam pulled over, therefore, under the lee of Manhattan Island, and, coasting along, came to a snug nook, just under a steep beetling rock, where he fastened his skiff to the root of a tree that shot out from a cleft in the rock, and spread its broad branches, like a canopy, over the water. The gust came scouring along; the wind threw up the river in white surges; the rain rattled among the leaves; the thunder bel-

lowed worse than that which is now bellowing; the lightning seemed to lick up the surges of the stream; but Sam, snugly sheltered under rock and tree, lay crouched in his skiff, rocking upon the billows until he fell asleep.

When he awoke, all was quiet. The gust had passed away, and only now and then a faint gleam of lightning in the east showed which way it had gone. The night was dark and moonless; and from the state of the tide Sam concluded it was near midnight. He was on the point of making loose his skiff to return homewards, when he saw a light gleaming along the water from a distance, which seemed rapidly approaching. As it drew near, he perceived it came from a lantern in the bow of a boat, which was gliding along under shadow of the land. It pulled up in a small cove, close to where he was. A man jumped on shore, and searching about with the lantern, exclaimed, "This is the place—here's the iron ring." The boat was then made fast, and the man returning on board, assisted his comrades in conveying some-

thing heavy on shore. As the light gleamed among them, Sam saw that they were five stout desperate-looking fellows, in red woollen caps, with a leader in a three-cornered hat, and that some of them were armed with dirks, or long knives and pistols. They talked low to one another, and occasionally in some outlandish tongue which he could not understand.

On landing, they made their way among the bushes, taking turns to relieve each other in lugging their burthen up the rocky bank. Sam's curiosity was now fully aroused; so, leaving his skiff, he clambered silently up a ridge that overlooked their path. They had stopped to rest for a moment; and the leader was looking about among the bushes with his lantern. "Have you brought the spades?" said one. "They are here," replied another, who had them on his shoulder.

"We must dig deep, where there will be no risk of discovery," said a third.

A cold chill ran through Sam's veins. He fancied he saw before him a gang of murderers

about to bury their victim. His knees smote together. In his agitation he shook the branch of a tree with which he was supporting himself, as he looked over the edge of the cliff.

"What's that?" cried one of the gang. "Some one stirs among the bushes!"

The lantern was held up in the direction of the noise. One of the red-caps cocked a pistol, and pointed it towards the very place where Sam was standing. He stood motionless—breathless—expecting the next moment to be his last. Fortunately, his dingy complexion was in his favour, and made no glare among the leaves.

"'Tis no one," said the man with the lantern. "What, a plague! you would not fire off your pistol and alarm the country?"

The pistol was uncocked, the burthen was resumed, and the party slowly toiled along the bank. Sam watched them as they went, the light sending back fitful gleams through the dripping bushes; and it was not till they were fairly out of sight that he ventured to draw breath freely. He now thought of getting

back to his boat, and making his escape out of the reach of such dangerous neighbours; but curiosity was all powerful. He hesitated, and lingered, and listened. By and by he heard the strokes of spades. "They are digging the grave!" said he to himself, and the cold sweat started upon his forehead. Every stroke of a spade, as it sounded through the silent groves, went to his heart; it was evident there was as little noise made as possible; every thing had an air of terrible mystery and secrecy. Sam had a great relish for the horrible—a tale of murder was a treat for him, and he was a constant attendant at executions. He could not resist an impulse, in spite of every danger, to steal nearer to the scene of mystery, and overlook the midnight fellows at their work. He crawled along cautiously, therefore, inch by inch, stepping with the utmost care among the dry leaves, lest their rustling should betray him. He came at length to where a steep rock intervened between him and the gang; for he saw the light of their lantern shining up against the

branches of the trees on the other side. Sam slowly and silently clambered up the surface of the rock, and raising his head above its naked edge, beheld the villains immediately below him, and so near, that though he dreaded discovery, he dared not withdraw, lest the least movement should be heard. In this way he remained, with his round black face peering above the edge of the rock, like the sun just emerging above the edge of the horizon, or the round-cheeked moon on the dial of a clock.

The red-caps had nearly finished their work; the grave was filled up, and they were carefully replacing the turf. This done, they scattered dry leaves over the place; "And now," said the leader, "I defy the devil himself to find it out!"

"The murderers!" exclaimed Sam, involuntarily. The whole gang started, and looking up, beheld the round black head of Sam just above them; his white eyes strained half out of their orbits, his white teeth chattering, and his whole visage shining with cold perspiration.

"We're discovered!" cried one.

"Down with him!" cried another.

Sam heard the cocking of a pistol, but did not pause for the report. He scrambled over rock and stone, through bush and briar; rolled down banks like a hedgehog; scrambled up others like a catamount. In every direction he heard some one or other of the gang hemming him in. At length he reached the rocky ridge along the river: one of the Red-caps was hard behind him. A steep rock like a wall rose directly in his way; it seemed to cut off all retreat, when, fortunately, he espied the strong cord-like branch of a grape-vine reaching half way down it. He sprang at it with the force of a desperate man; seized it with both hands; and, being young and agile, succeeded in swinging himself to the summit of the cliff. Here he stood in full relief against the sky, when the Red-cap cocked his pistol and fired. The ball whistled by Sam's head. With the lucky thought of a man in an emergency, he uttered a yell, fell to the ground, and detached at the same time a fragment of the rock, which tumbled with a loud splash into the river.

"I've done his business," said the Red-cap to one or two of his comrades as they arrived panting: "he'll tell no tales, except to the fishes in the river."

His pursuers now turned off to meet their companions. Sam, sliding silently down the surface of the rock, let himself quietly into his skiff; cast loose the fastening, and abandoned himself to the rapid current, which in that place runs like a mill-stream, and soon swept him off from the neighbourhood. It was not, however, until he had drifted a great distance that he ventured to ply his oars; when he made his skiff dart like an arrow through the strait of Hell-gate, never heeding the danger of Pot, Frying-pan, or Hog's Back itself; nor did he feel himself thoroughly secure until safely nestled in bed in the cockloft of the ancient farm-house of the Suydams.

Here the worthy Peechy Prauw paused to take breath, and to take a sip of the gossip tankard that stood at his elbow. His auditors

remained with open mouths and outstretched necks, gaping like a nest of swallows for an additional mouthful.

"And is that all?" exclaimed the half-pay officer.

"That's all that belongs to the story," said Peechy Prauw.

"And did Sam never find out what was buried by the Red-caps?" said Wolfert, eagerly, whose mind was haunted by nothing but ingots and doubloons.

"Not that I know of," said Peechy; "he had no time to spare from his work, and, to tell the truth, he did not like to run the risk of another race among the rocks. Besides, how should he recollect the spot where the grave had been digged, every thing would look so different by daylight. And then, where was the use of looking for a dead body, when there was no chance of hanging the murderers?"

"Ay, but are you sure it was a dead body they buried?" said Wolfert.

"To be sure," cried Peechy Prauw, exultingly.

"Does it not haunt in the neighbourhood to this very day?"

"Haunts!" exclaimed several of the party, opening their eyes still wider, and edging their chairs still closer.

"Ay, haunts," repeated Peechy: "have none of you heard of father Red-cap, that haunts the old burnt farm-house in the woods, on the border of the Sound, near Hell-gate?"

"Oh! to be sure, I've heard tell of something of the kind: but then I took it for some old wives' fable."

"Old wives' fable or not," said Peechy Prauw, "that farm-house stands hard by the very spot. It's been unoccupied time out of mind, and stands in a lonely part of the coast; but those who fish in the neighbourhood have often heard strange noises there; and lights have been seen about the wood at night; and an old fellow in a red cap has been seen at the windows more than once, which people take to be the ghost of the body that was buried there. Once upon a time three soldiers took shelter in the building

for the night, and rummaged it from top to bottom, when they found old father Red-cap astride of a cider-barrel in the cellar, with a jug in one hand and a goblet in the other. He offered them a drink out of his goblet; but just as one of the soldiers was putting it to his mouth—whew!—a flash of fire blazed through the cellar; blinded every mother's son of them for several minutes, and when they recovered their eye-sight, jug, goblet, and Red-cap, had vanished, and nothing but the empty cider-barrel remained!"

Here the half-pay officer, who was growing very muzzy and sleepy, and nodding over his liquor, with half-extinguished eye, suddenly gleamed up, like an expiring rushlight.—

"That's all fudge!" said he, as Peechy finished his last story.

"Well, I don't vouch for the truth of it myself," said Peechy Prauw, "though all the world knows that there's something strange about that house and ground; but as to the story of Mud Sam, I believe it just as well as if it had happened to myself."

The deep interest taken in this conversation by the company had made them unconscious of the uproar that prevailed abroad among the elements, when suddenly they were all electrified by a tremendous clap of thunder; a lumbering crash followed instantaneously, shaking the building to its very foundation—all started from their seats, imagining it the shock of an earthquake, or that old father Red-cap was coming among them in all his terrors. They listened for a moment, but only heard the rain pelting against the windows, and the wind howling among the trees. The explosion was soon explained by the apparition of an old negro's bald head thrust in at the door, his white goggle eyes contrasting with his jetty poll, which was wet with rain, and shone like a bottle. In a jargon but half intelligible, he announced that the kitchen chimney had been struck with lightning.

A sullen pause of the storm, which now rose and sunk in gusts, produced a momentary stillness. In this interval, the report of a musket was heard, and a long shout, almost like a yell, re-

sounded from the shore. Every one crowded to the window. Another musket-shot was heard, and another long shout, that mingled wildly with a rising blast of wind. It seemed as if the cry came up from the bosom of the waters; for though incessant flashes of lightning spread a light about the shore, no one was to be seen.

Suddenly the window of the room overhead was opened, and a loud halloo uttered by the mysterious stranger. Several hailings passed from one party to the other, but in a language which none of the company in the bar-room could understand; and presently they heard the window closed, and a great noise overhead, as if all the furniture were pulled and hauled about the room. The negro servant was summoned, and shortly after was seen assisting the veteran to lug the ponderous sea-chest down stairs.

The landlord was in amazement—"What!—you are not going on the water in such a storm?"

"Storm!" said the other scornfully; "do you call such a sputter of weather a storm?"

"You'll get drenched to the skin—you'll catch your death!" said Peechy Prauw, affectionately.

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed the merman; "don't preach about weather to a man that has cruised in whirlwinds and tornadoes!"

The obsequious Peechy was again struck dumb. The voice from the water was heard once more, in a tone of impatience. The bystanders stared with redoubled awe at this man of storms, who seemed to have come up out of the deep, and to be summoned back to it again. As, with the assistance of the negro, he slowly bore his ponderous sea-chest towards the shore, they eyed it with a superstitious feeling, half doubting whether he were not really about to embark upon it, and launch forth upon the wild waves. They followed him at a distance with a lantern.

"Dowse the light!" roared the hoarse voice from the water—"no one wants lights here!"

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed the veteran, turning short upon them; "back to the house with you!"

Wolfert and his companions shrunk back in dismay. Still their curiosity would not allow them entirely to withdraw. A long sheet of lightning now flickered across the waves, and discovered a boat, filled with men, just under a rocky point, rising and sinking with the heaving surges, and swashing the water at every heave. It was with difficulty held to the rocks by a boat-hook, for the current rushed furiously round the point. The veteran hoisted one end of the lumbering sea-chest on the gunwale of the boat; he seized the handle at the other end to lift it in, when the motion propelled the boat from the shore; the chest slipped off from the gunwale, and, sinking into the waves, pulled the veteran headlong after it. A loud shriek was uttered by all on shore, and a volley of execrations by those on board—but boat and man were hurried away by the rushing swiftness of the tide. A pitchy darkness succeeded; Wol-

fert Webber, indeed, fancied that he distinguished a cry for help, and that he beheld the drowning man beckoning for assistance; but when the lightning again gleamed along the water, all was void; neither man nor boat were to be seen; nothing but the dashing and weltering of the waves as they hurried past.

The company returned to the tavern to await the subsiding of the storm. They resumed their seats, and gazed on each other with dismay. The whole transaction had not occupied five minutes, and not a dozen words had been spoken. When they looked at the oaken chair, they could scarcely realize the fact that the strange being, who had so lately tenanted it, full of life and Herculean vigour, should already be a corpse. There was the very glass he had just drank from; there lay the ashes from the pipe which he had smoked, as it were, with his last breath. As the worthy burghers pondered on these things, they felt a terrible conviction of the uncertainty of existence, and each felt as if the ground on which

he stood was rendered less stable by this awful example.

As, however, the most of the company were possessed of that valuable philosophy which enables a man to bear up with fortitude against the misfortunes of his neighbours, they soon managed to console themselves for the tragic end of the veteran. The landlord was particularly happy that the poor dear man had paid his reckoning before he went; and made a kind of farewell speech on the occasion. "He came," said he, "in a storm, and he went in a storm—he came in the night, and he went in the night—he came nobody knows from whence, and he has gone nobody knows where. For aught I know, he has gone to sea once more on his chest, and may land to bother some people on the other side of the world! Though it's a thousand pities," added he, "if he has gone to Davy Jones' locker, that he had not left his own locker behind him."

"His locker! St. Nicholas preserve us!" cried Peechy Prauw—"I 'd not have had that sea-chest

in the house for any money; I'll warrant he'd come racketing after it at nights, and making a haunted house of the inn; and as to his going to sea in his chest, I recollect what happened to Skipper Onderdonk's ship, on his voyage from Amsterdam. The boatswain died during a storm, so they wrapped him up in a sheet, and put him in his own sea-chest, and threw him overboard; but they neglected, in their hurry scurry, to say prayers over him; and the storm raged and roared louder than ever, and they saw the dead man seated in his chest, with his shroud for a sail, coming hard after the ship, and the sea breaking before him in great sprays, like fire, and there they kept scudding day after day, and night after night, expecting every moment to go to wreck; and every night they saw the dead boatswain, in his sea-chest, trying to get up with them, and they heard his whistle above the blasts of wind, and he seemed to send great seas, mountain high, after them, that would have swamped the ship if they had not put up the dead lights: and so it went on till they lost

sight of him in the fogs of Newfoundland, and supposed he had veered ship, and stood for Dead Man's Isle. So much for burying a man at sea, without saying prayers over him."

The thunder-gust which had hitherto detained the company was at an end. The cuckoo clock in the hall told midnight; every one pressed to depart, for seldom was such a late hour of the night trespassed on by these quiet burghers. As they sallied forth, they found the heavens once more serene. The storm which had lately obscured them had rolled away, and lay piled up in fleecy masses on the horizon, lighted up by the bright crescent of the moon, which looked like a little silver lamp hung up in a palace of clouds.

The dismal occurrence of the night, and the dismal narrations they had made, had left a superstitious feeling in every mind. They cast a fearful glance at the spot where the buccaneer had disappeared, almost expecting to see him sailing on his chest in the cool moonshine. The trembling rays glittered along the waters, but all was placid; and the current dimpled

over the spot where he had gone down. The party huddled together in a little crowd as they repaired homewards, particularly when they passed a lonely field where a man had been murdered; and even the sexton, who had to complete his journey alone, though accustomed, one would think, to ghosts and goblins, yet went a long way round, rather than pass by his own churchyard.

Wolfert Webber had now carried home a fresh stock of stories and notions to ruminate upon. These accounts of pots of money and Spanish treasures, buried here and there and every where about the rocks and bays of these wild shores, made him almost dizzy. "Blessed St. Nicholas!" ejaculated he, half aloud, "is it not possible to come upon one of these golden hoards, and to make oneself rich in a twinkling? How hard that I must go on, delving and delving, day in and day out, merely to make a morsel of bread, when one lucky stroke of a spade might enable me to ride in my carriage for the rest of my life!"

As he turned over in his thoughts all that had been told of the singular adventure of the negro fisherman, his imagination gave a totally different complexion to the tale. He saw in the gang of Red-caps nothing but a crew of pirates burying their spoils, and his cupidity was once more awakened by the possibility of at length getting on the traces of some of this lurking wealth. Indeed, his infected fancy tinged every thing with gold. He felt like the greedy inhabitant of Bagdad, when his eye had been greased with the magic ointment of the dervise, that gave him to see all the treasures of the earth. Caskets of buried jewels, chests of ingots, and barrels of outlandish coins, seemed to court him from their concealments, and supplicate him to relieve them from their untimely graves.

On making private inquiries about the grounds said to be haunted by father Red-cap, he was more and more confirmed in his surmise. He learned that the place had several times been visited by experienced money-diggers, who had heard Black Sam's story, though none of them

had met with success. On the contrary, they had always been dogged with ill luck of some kind or other, in consequence, as Wolfert concluded, of not going to work at the proper time, and with the proper ceremonials. The last attempt had been made by Cobus Quackenbos, who dug for a whole night, and met with incredible difficulty, for, as fast as he threw one shovelfull of earth out of the hole, two were thrown in by invisible hands. He succeeded so far, however, as to uncover an iron chest, when there was a terrible roaring, a ramping and raging of uncouth figures about the hole, and at length a shower of blows dealt by invisible cudgels, that fairly belaboured him off of the forbidden ground. This Cobus Quackenbos had declared on his death-bed, so that there could not be any doubt of it. He was a man that had devoted many years of his life to money-digging, and it was thought would have ultimately succeeded, had he not died recently of a brain fever in the almshouse.

Wolfert Webber was now in a worry of tre-

pidation and impatience, fearful lest some rival adventurer should get a scent of the buried gold. He determined privately to seek out the black fisherman, and get him to serve as guide to the place where he had witnessed the mysterious scene of interment. Sam was easily found, for he was one of those old habitual beings that live about a neighbourhood until they wear themselves a place in the public mind, and become, in a manner, public characters. There was not an unlucky urchin about town that did not know Mud Sam, the fisherman, and think that he had a right to play his tricks upon the old negro. Sam had led an amphibious life, for more than half a century, about the shores of the bay and the fishing-grounds of the Sound. He passed the greater part of his time on and in the water, particularly about Hell-gate; and might have been taken, in bad weather, for one of the hobgoblins that used to haunt that strait. There would he be seen at all times, and in all weathers; sometimes in his skiff anchored among the eddies, or prowling

like a shark about some wreck, where the fish are supposed to be most abundant. Sometimes seated on a rock, from hour to hour, looking, in the mist and drizzle, like a solitary heron watching for its prey. He was well acquainted with every hole and corner of the Sound, from the Wallabout to Hell-gate, and from Hell-gate even unto the Devil's Stepping-stones; and it was even affirmed that he knew all the fish in the river by their christian names.

Wolfert found him at his cabin, which was not much larger than a tolerable dog-house. It was rudely constructed of fragments of wrecks and drift wood, and built on the rocky shore, at the foot of the old fort, just about what at present forms the point of the battery. A "most ancient and fish-like smell" pervaded the place. Oars, paddles, and fishing-rods were leaning against the wall of the fort; a net was spread on the sands to dry; a skiff was drawn up on the beach; and at the door of his cabin was Mud Sam himself, indulging in the true negro luxury of sleeping in the sunshine.

Many years had passed away since the time of Sam's youthful adventure, and the snows of many a winter had grizzled the knotty wool upon his head. He perfectly recollected the circumstances, however, for he had often been called upon to relate them, though, in his version of the story, he differed in many points from Peechy Prauw; as is not unfrequently the case with authentic historians. As to the subsequent researches of money-diggers, Sam knew nothing about them, they were matters quite out of his line; neither did the cautious Wolfert care to disturb his thoughts on that point. His only wish was to secure the old fisherman as a pilot to the spot, and this was readily effected. The long time that had intervened since his nocturnal adventure had effaced all Sam's awe of the place, and the promise of a trifling reward roused him at once from his sleep and his sunshine.

The tide was adverse to making the expedition by water, and Wolfert was too impatient to get to the land of promise to wait for its turning; they set off therefore by land. A walk of four

or five miles brought them to the edge of a wood, which at that time covered the greater part of the eastern side of the island. It was just beyond the pleasant region of Bloomen-dael. Here they struck into a long lane, straggling among trees and bushes, very much overgrown with weeds and mullein stalks, as if but seldom used, and so completely overshadowed, as to enjoy but a kind of twilight. Wild vines entangled the trees, and flaunted in their faces; brambles and briers caught their clothes as they passed; the garter snake glided across their path; the spotted toad hopped and waddled before them; and the restless cat-bird mewed at them from every thicket. Had Wolfert Webber been deeply read in romantic legend, he might have fancied himself entering upon forbidden, enchanted ground; or that these were some of the guardians set to keep a watch upon buried treasure. As it was, the loneliness of the place, and the wild stories connected with it, had their effect upon his mind.

On reaching the lower end of the lane, they

found themselves near the shore of the Sound, in a kind of amphitheatre surrounded by forest trees. The area had once been a grass-plot, but was now shagged with briers and rank weeds. At one end, and just on the river bank, was a ruined building, little better than a heap of rubbish, with a stack of chimneys rising, like a solitary tower, out of the centre; the current of the Sound rushed along just below it, with wildly grown trees drooping their branches into its waves.

Wolfert had not a doubt that this was the haunted house of father Red-cap, and called to mind the story of Peechy Prauw. The evening was approaching, and the light, falling dubiously among these woody places, gave a melancholy tone to the scene, well calculated to foster any lurking feeling of awe or superstition. The night-hawk, wheeling about in the highest regions of the air, emitted his peevish, boding cry. The woodpecker gave a lonely tap now and then on some hollow tree, and the fire-bird* streamed by them with his deep red plumage. They now came to

* Orchard oreole.

an enclosure that had once been a garden. It extended along the foot of a rocky ridge, but was little better than a wilderness of weeds, with here and there a matted rose-bush, or a peach or plum-tree, grown wild and ragged, and covered with moss. At the lower end of the garden they passed a kind of vault in the side of a bank, facing the water. It had the look of a root-house. The door, though decayed, was still strong, and appeared to have been recently patched up. Wolfert pushed it open. It gave a harsh grating upon its hinges, and striking against something like a box, a rattling sound ensued, and a scull rolled on the floor. Wolfert drew back shuddering, but was reassured, on being informed by the negro that this was a family vault belonging to one of the old Dutch families that owned this estate; an assertion which was corroborated by the sight of coffins of various sizes piled within. Sam had been familiar with all these scenes when a boy, and now knew that he could not be far from the place of which they were in quest.

They now made their way to the water's

edge, scrambling along ledges of rocks that overhung the waves, and obliged often to hold by shrubs and grape-vines to avoid slipping into the deep and hurried stream. At length they came to a small cove, or rather indent of the shore. It was protected by steep rocks, and overshadowed by a thick copse of oaks and chestnuts, so as to be sheltered and almost concealed. The beach shelved gradually within the cove, but the current swept, deep and black and rapid along its jutting points.

The negro paused; raised his remnant of a hat, and scratched his grizzled poll for a moment, as he regarded this nook: then suddenly clapping his hands, he stepped exultingly forward, and pointed to a large iron ring, stapled firmly in the rock, just where a broad shelf of stone furnished a commodious landing-place. It was the very spot where the Red-caps had landed. Years had changed the more perishable features of the scene; but rock and iron yield slowly to the influence of time. On looking more closely, Wolfert remarked three crosses

cut in the rock just above the ring; which had no doubt some mysterious signification.

Old Sam now readily recognised the overhanging rock under which his skiff had been sheltered during the thunder-gust. To follow up the course which the midnight gang had taken, however, was a harder task. His mind had been so much taken up on that eventful occasion by the persons of the drama, as to pay but little attention to the scenes; and these places look so different by night and day. After wandering about for some time, however, they came to an opening among the trees, which Sam thought resembled the place. There was a ledge of rock of moderate height, like a wall, on one side, which he thought might be the very ridge from whence he had overlooked the diggers. Wolfert examined it narrowly, and at length discovered three crosses, similar to those above the iron ring, cut deeply into the face of the rock, but nearly obliterated by the moss that had grown over them. His heart leaped with joy, for he doubted not they were the private marks of the

buccaneers. All now that remained was to ascertain the precise spot where the treasure lay buried, for otherwise he might dig at random in the neighbourhood of the crosses, without coming upon the spoils, and he had already had enough of such profitless labour. Here, however, the old negro was perfectly at a loss, and indeed perplexed him by a variety of opinions; for his recollections were all confused. Sometimes he declared it must have been at the foot of a mulberry-tree hard by; then it was just beside a great white stone; then it must have been under a small green knoll, a short distance from the ledge of rock; until at length Wolfert became as bewildered as himself.

The shadows of evening were now spreading themselves over the woods, and rock and tree began to mingle together. It was evidently too late to attempt any thing farther at present; and indeed Wolfert had come unprovided with implements to prosecute his researches. Satisfied, therefore, with having ascertained the place, he took note of all its landmarks, that he might

recognise it again, and set out on his return homewards; resolved to prosecute this golden enterprise without delay.

The leading anxiety, which had hitherto absorbed every feeling, being now in some measure appeased, fancy began to wander, and to conjure up a thousand shapes and chimeras as he returned through this haunted region. Pirates hanging in chains seemed to swing from every tree, and he almost expected to see some Spanish Don, with his throat cut from ear to ear, rising slowly out of the ground, and shaking the ghost of a money-bag.

Their way back lay through the desolate garden, and Wolfert's nerves had arrived at so sensitive a state, that the flitting of a bird, the rustling of a leaf, or the falling of a nut, was enough to startle them. As they entered the confines of the garden, they caught sight of a figure at a distance, advancing slowly up one of the walks, and bending under the weight of a burthen. They paused, and regarded him attentively. He wore what appeared to be a woollen

cap, and, still more alarming, of a most sanguinary red. The figure moved slowly on, ascended the bank, and stopped at the very door of the sepulchral vault. Just before entering it, he looked around. What was the affright of Wolfert, when he recognised the grisly visage of the drowned buccaneer! He uttered an ejaculation of horror. The figure slowly raised his iron fist, and shook it with a terrible menace.

Wolfert did not pause to see any more, but hurried off as fast as his legs could carry him, nor was Sam slow in following at his heels, having all his ancient terrors revived. Away then did they scramble, through bush and brake, horribly frightened at every bramble that tugged at their skirts; nor did they pause to breathe, until they had blundered their way through this perilous wood, and had fairly reached the high road to the city.

Several days elapsed before Wolfert could summon courage enough to prosecute the enterprise, so much had he been dismayed by the apparition, whether living or dead, of the grisly

buccaneer. In the mean time what a conflict of mind did he suffer! He neglected all his concerns; was moody and restless all day; lost his appetite; wandered in his thoughts and words, and committed a thousand blunders. His rest was broken; and when he fell asleep, the nightmare, in shape of a huge money-bag, sat squatted upon his breast. He babbled about incalculable sums; fancied himself engaged in money-digging; threw the bed-clothes right and left, in the idea that he was shoveling away the dirt; groped under the bed in quest of the treasure, and lugged forth, as he supposed, an inestimable pot of gold.

Dame Webber and her daughter were in despair at what they conceived a returning touch of insanity. There are two family oracles, one or other of which Dutch housewives consult in all cases of great doubt and perplexity—the dominie and the doctor. In the present instance, they repaired to the doctor. There was at that time a little, dark, mouldy man of medicine, famous among the old wives of the Manhattoes for his

skill, not only in the healing art, but in all matters of strange and mysterious nature. His name was Dr. Knipperhausen, but he was more commonly known by the appellation of the high German doctor *. To him did the poor women repair for council and assistance touching the mental vagaries of Wolfert Webber.

They found the doctor seated in his little study, clad in his dark camblet robe of knowledge, with his black velvet cap, after the manner of Boerhaave, Van Helmont, and other medical sages; a pair of green spectacles set in black horn upon his clubbed nose; and poring over a German folio that reflected back the darkness of his physiognomy.

The doctor listened to their statement of the symptoms of Wolfert's malady with profound attention; but when they came to mention his raving about buried money, the little man pricked up his ears. Alas, poor women! they little knew the aid they had called in.

* The same, no doubt, of whom mention is made in the history of Dolph Heyliger.

Dr. Knipperhausen had been half his life engaged in seeking the short cuts to fortune, in quest of which so many a long lifetime is wasted. He had passed some years of his youth among the Harz mountains of Germany, and had derived much valuable instruction from the miners, touching the mode of seeking treasure buried in the earth. He had prosecuted his studies also under a travelling sage, who united the mysteries of medicine with magic and legerdemain. His mind, therefore, had become stored with all kinds of mystic lore; he had dabbled a little in astrology, alchemy, divination; knew how to detect stolen money, and to tell where springs of water lay hidden; in a word, by the dark nature of his knowledge he had acquired the name of the high German doctor, which is pretty nearly equivalent to that of necromancer.

The doctor had often heard the rumours of treasure being buried in various parts of the island, and had long been anxious to get in the traces of it. No sooner were Wolfert's waking and sleeping vagaries confided to him, than he

beheld in them the confirmed symptoms of a case of money-digging, and lost no time in probing it to the bottom. Wolfert had long been sorely oppressed in mind by the golden secret, and as a family physician is a kind of father confessor, he was glad of an opportunity of unburthening himself. So far from curing, the doctor caught the malady from his patient. The circumstances unfolded to him awakened all his cupidity; he had not a doubt of money being buried somewhere in the neighbourhood of the mysterious crosses, and offered to join Wolfert in the search. He informed him that much secrecy and caution must be observed in enterprises of the kind; that money is only to be digged for at night, with certain forms and ceremonies, the burning of drugs, the repeating of mystic words, and above all, that the seekers must first be provided with a divining rod, which had the wonderful property of pointing to the very spot on the surface of the earth under which treasure lay hidden. As the doctor had given much of his mind to these matters, he charged himself

with all the necessary preparations, and as the quarter of the moon was propitious, he undertook to have the divining rod ready by a certain night*.

* The following note was found appended to this passage, in the hand-writing of Mr. Knickerbocker:

There has been much written against the divining rod by those light minds who are ever ready to scoff at the mysteries of nature; but I fully join with Dr. Knipperhausen in giving it my faith. I shall not insist upon its efficacy in discovering the concealment of stolen goods, the boundary stones of fields, the traces of robbers and murderers, or even the existence of subterraneous springs and streams of water; albeit I think these properties not to be readily discredited; but of its potency in discovering veins of precious metal, and hidden sums of money, and jewels, I have not the least doubt. Some said that the rod turned only in the hands of persons who had been born in particular months of the year; hence astrologers had recourse to planetary influence when they would procure a talisman. Others declared that the properties of the rod were either an effect of chance, or the fraud of the holder, or the work of the devil. Thus saith the reverend father Gaspard Sebett in his treatise on magic: "Propter hæc et similia argumenta audacter ego promisero vim conversivam virgulæ bifurcatæ nequaquam naturalem esse, sed vel casu vel fraude virgulam tractantis vel ope diaboli, &c." Georgius Agricola also was of opinion that it was a mere delusion of the devil to inveigle the avaricious and unwary into his clutches; and in his treatise, "De Re Metallica," lays particular stress on

Wolfert's heart leaped with joy at having met with so learned and able a coadjutor. Every thing went on secretly but swimmingly. The doctor had many consultations with his patient, and the good woman of the household lauded the comforting effect of his visits. In the mean time, the wonderful divining rod, that great key to nature's secrets, was duly prepared. The doctor had thumbed over all his books of knowledge for the occasion; and the black fisherman was engaged to take him in his skiff to the scene of enterprise; to work with spade and pickaxe in unearthing the treasure; and to freight

the mysterious words pronounced by those persons who employed the divining rod during his time. But I make not a doubt that the divining rod is one of those secrets of natural magic, the mystery of which is to be explained by the sympathies existing between physical things operated upon by the planets, and rendered efficacious by the strong faith of the individual. Let the divining rod be properly gathered at the proper time of the moon, cut into the proper form, used with the necessary ceremonies, and with a perfect faith in its efficacy, and I can confidently recommend it to my fellow-citizens as an infallible means of discovering the various places on the island of the Manhattoes, where treasure hath been buried in the olden time. D. K.

his bark with the weighty spoils they were cer-certain of finding.

At length the appointed night arrived for this perilous undertaking. Before Wolfert left his home, he counselled his wife and daughter to go to bed, and feel no alarm if he should not return during the night. Like reasonable women, on being told not to feel alarm, they fell immediately into a panic. They saw at once by his manner that something unusual was in agitation; all their fears about the unsettled state of his mind were revived with tenfold force; they hung about him, entreating him not to expose himself to the night air, but all in vain. When once Wolfert was mounted on his hobby, it was no easy matter to get him out of the saddle. It was a clear starlight night, when he issued out of the portal of the Webber palace. He wore a large flapped hat, tied under the chin with a handkerchief of his daughter's, to secure him from the night damp; while Dame Webber threw her long red cloak about his shoulders, and fastened it round his neck.

The doctor had been no less carefully armed and accoutred by his housekeeper, the vigilant Frau Ilsy; and sallied forth in his camblet robe by way of surcoat; his black velvet cap under his cocked hat; a thick clasped book under his arm; a basket of drugs and dried herbs in one hand, and in the other the miraculous rod of divination.

The great church clock struck ten as Wolfert and the doctor passed by the churchyard, and the watchman bawled, in hoarse voice, a long and doleful "All's well!" A deep sleep had already fallen upon this primitive little burgh. Nothing disturbed this awful silence, excepting now and then the bark of some profligate, night-walking dog, or the serenade of some romantic cat.

It is true Wolfert fancied more than once that he heard the sound of a stealthy footfall at a distance behind them; but it might have been merely the echo of their own steps echoing along the quiet streets. He thought also, at one time, that he saw a tall figure sculking after

them, stopping when they stopped, and moving on as they proceeded; but the dim and uncertain lamp-light threw such vague gleams and shadows, that this might all have been mere fancy.

They found the old fisherman waiting for them, smoking his pipe in the stern of his skiff, which was moored just in front of his little cabin. A pick-axe and spade were lying in the bottom of the boat, with a dark lantern, and a stone bottle of good Dutch courage, in which honest Sam, no doubt, put even more faith than Dr. Knipperhausen in his drugs.

Thus, then, did these three worthies embark in their cockleshell of a skiff upon this nocturnal expedition, with a wisdom and valour equalled only by the three wise men of Gotham, who adventured to sea in a bowl. The tide was rising and running rapidly up the Sound. The current bore them along almost without the aid of an oar. The profile of the town lay all in shadow. Here and there a light feebly glimmered from some sick chamber, or from the

cabin-window of some vessel at anchor in the stream. Not a cloud obscured the deep starry firmament, the lights of which wavered on the surface of the placid river, and a shooting meteor, streaking its pale course in the very direction they were taking, was interpreted by the doctor into a most propitious omen.

In a little while they glided by the point of Corlear's Hook, with the rural inn, which had been the scene of such night adventures. The family had retired to rest, and the house was dark and still. Wolfert felt a chill pass over him as they passed the point where the buccaneer had disappeared. He pointed it out to Dr. Knipperhausen. While regarding it, they thought they saw a boat actually lurking at the very place; but the shore cast such a shadow over the border of the water, that they could discern nothing distinctly. They had not proceeded far, when they heard the low sound of distant oars, as if cautiously pulled. Sam plied his oars with redoubled vigour, and knowing all

the eddies and currents of the stream, soon left their followers, if such they were, far astern. In a little while they stretched across Turtle Bay and Kip's Bay, then shrouded themselves in the deep shadows of the Manhattan shore, and glided swiftly along, secure from observation. At length the negro shot his skiff into a little cove, darkly embowered by trees, and made it fast to the well-known iron ring.

They now landed, and lighting the lantern, gathered their various implements, and proceeded slowly through the bushes. Every sound startled them, even that of their own footsteps among the dry leaves; and the hooting of a screech-owl from the shattered chimney of the neighbouring ruin made their blood run cold.

In spite of all Wolfert's caution in taking note of the landmarks, it was some time before they could find the open place among the trees, where the treasure was supposed to be buried. At length they came to the ledge of rock, and on examining its surface by the aid of the

lantern, Wolfert recognised the three mystic crosses. Their hearts beat quick, for the momentous trial was at hand that was to determine their hopes.

The lantern was now held by Wolfert Webber, while the doctor produced the divining rod. It was a forked twig, one end of which was grasped firmly in each hand; while the centre, forming the stem, pointed perpendicularly upwards. The doctor moved this wand about, within a certain distance of the earth, from place to place, but for some time without any effect; while Wolfert kept the light of the lantern turned full upon it, and watched it with the most breathless interest. At length the rod began slowly to turn. The doctor grasped it with greater earnestness, his hands trembling with the agitation of his mind. The wand continued to turn gradually, until at length the stem had reversed its position, and pointed perpendicularly downward, and remained pointing to one spot as fixedly as the needle to the pole.

"This is the spot!" said the doctor, in an almost inaudible tone.

Wolfert's heart was in his throat.

"Shall I dig?" said the negro, grasping the spade.

"*Potstansends*, no!" replied the little doctor hastily. He now ordered his companions to keep close by him, and to maintain the most inflexible silence; that certain precautions must be taken, and ceremonies used, to prevent the evil spirits, which kept about buried treasure, from doing them any harm.

He then drew a circle round the place enough to include the whole party. He next gathered dry twigs and leaves, and made a fire, upon which he threw certain drugs and dried herbs, which he had brought in his basket. A thick smoke rose, diffusing a potent odour, savouring marvellously of brimstone and asafœtida, which however grateful it might be to the olfactory nerves of spirits, nearly strangled poor Wolfert, and produced a fit of coughing and wheezing that made the whole grove resound. Dr. Knip-

perhausen then unclasped the volume which he had brought under his arm, which was printed in red and black characters in German text. While Wolfert held the lantern, the doctor, by the aid of his spectacles, read off several forms of conjuration in Latin and German. He then ordered Sam to seize the pick-axe and proceed to work. The close-bound soil gave obstinate signs of not having been disturbed for many a year. After having picked his way through the surface, Sam came to a bed of sand and gravel, which he threw briskly to right and left with the spade.

"Hark!" said Wolfert, who fancied he heard a trampling among the dry leaves, and a rustling through the bushes. Sam paused for a moment, and they listened—no footstep was near. The bat flitted by them in silence; a bird, roused from its roost by the light which glared up among the trees, flew circling about the flame. In the profound stillness of the woodland they could distinguish the current rippling along the rocky

shore, and the distant murmuring and roaring of Hell-gate.

The negro continued his labours, and had already digged a considerable hole. The doctor stood on the edge, reading formulæ, every now and then, from his black letter volume, or throwing more drugs and herbs upon the fire; while Wolfert bent anxiously over the pit, watching every stroke of the spade. Any one witnessing the scene, thus lighted up by fire, lantern, and the reflection of Wolfert's red mantle, might have mistaken the little doctor for some foul magician, busied in his incantations, and the grizzly-headed negro for some swart goblin, obedient to his commands.

At length the spade of the old fisherman struck upon something that sounded hollow; the sound vibrated to Wolfert's heart. He struck his spade again—

"'Tis a chest," said Sam.

"Full of gold, I'll warrant it!" cried Wolfert, clasping his hands with rapture.

Scarcely had he uttered the words, when a sound from above caught his ear. He cast up his eyes, and lo! by the expiring light of the fire, he beheld, just over the disk of the rock, what appeared to be the grim visage of the drowned buccaneer, grinning hideously down upon him.

Wolfert gave a loud cry, and let fall the lantern. His panic communicated itself to his companions. The negro leaped out of the hole; the doctor dropped his book and basket, and began to pray in German. All was horror and confusion. The fire was scattered about, the lantern extinguished. In their hurry-scurry, they ran against and confounded one another. They fancied a legion of hobgoblins let loose upon them, and that they saw, by the fitful gleams of the scattered embers, strange figures in red caps, gibbering and ramping around them. The doctor ran one way, the negro another, and Wolfert made for the w[illegible]terside. As he plunged, struggling on[illegible]rough bush and brak[illegible] heard the trea[illegible]e one in pursuit.

He scrambled frantically forward. The footsteps gained upon him. He felt himself grasped by his cloak, when suddenly his pursuer was attacked in turn. A fierce fight and struggle ensued. A pistol was discharged that lit up rock and bush for a second, and showed two figures grappling together—all was then darker than ever. The contest continued; the combatants clenched each other, and panted and groaned, and rolled among the rocks. There was snarling and growling as of a cur, mingled with curses, in which Wolfert fancied he could recognise the voice of the buccaneer. He would fain have fled, but he was on the brink of a precipice, and could go no further. Again the parties were on their feet; again there was a tugging and struggling, as if strength alone could decide the combat, until one was precipitated from the brow of the cliff, and sent headlong into the deep stream that whirled below. Wolfert [illegible]ard the plunge, and a kind of strangling, bubb[illegible]mur; but the darkness of the night hid [illegible]ing from him [illegible] the

swiftness of the current swept every thing instantly out of hearing.

One of the combatants was disposed of, but whether friend or foe, Wolfert could not tell, or whether they might not both be foes. He heard the survivor approach, and his terror revived. He saw, where the profile of the rocks rose against the horizon, a human form advancing. He could not be mistaken—it must be the buccaneer. Whither should he fly? a precipice was on one side, a murderer on the other. The enemy approached—he was close at hand. Wolfert attempted to let himself down the face of the cliff. His cloak caught in a thorn that grew on the edge. He was jerked from off his feet, and held dangling in the air, half choked by the string with which his careful wife had fastened the garment round his neck. Wolfert thought his last moment was arrived; already had he comm[illegible]ted his soul to St. Nicholas, when the st[illegible] broke, and he tumbled down the ba[illegible]ing from rock to [illegible] bush to bus[illegible] leaving the red

cloak fluttering, like a bloody banner, in the air.

It was a long while before Wolfert came to himself. When he opened his eyes, the ruddy streaks of morning were already shooting up the sky. He found himself lying in the bottom of a boat, grievously battered. He attempted to sit up, but was too sore and stiff to move. A voice requested him, in friendly accents, to lie still. He turned his eyes towards the speaker—it was Dirk Waldron. He had dogged the party at the earnest request of Dame Webber and her daughter, who, with the laudable curiosity of their sex, had pried into the secret consultations of Wolfert and the doctor. Dirk had been completely distanced in following the light skiff of the fisherman, and had just come in time to rescue the poor money-digger from his pursuer.

Thus ended this perilous enterprise. The doctor and Blac[illegible]m s[illegible]erally found their way back to the Manh[illegible]ch having some dreadful tale of peril[illegible]. As to po[illegible]

instead of returning in triumph, laden with bags of gold, he was borne home on a shutter, followed by a rabble rout of curious urchins.

His wife and daughter saw the dismal pageant from a distance, and alarmed the neighbourhood with their cries; they thought the poor man had suddenly settled the great debt of nature in one of his wayward moods. Finding him, however, still living, they had him speedily to bed, and a jury of old matrons of the neighbourhood assembled to determine how he should be doctored.

The whole town was in a buzz with the story of the money-diggers. Many repaired to the scene of the previous night's adventures; but though they found the very place of the digging, they discovered nothing that compensated them for their trouble. Some say they found the fragments of an oaken chest, and an iron potlid, which savoured strongly of hidden money, and that in the old family vault the[illegible] were traces of bales and boxes; but [illegible]s is [illegible]ery dubious.

In f[illegible]ct, the secret [illegible] story has never [illegible] been disc[illegible] Whether any

treasure was ever actually buried at that place; whether, if so, it was carried off at night by those who had buried it; or whether it still remains there under the guardianship of gnomes and spirits until it shall be properly sought for, is all matter of conjecture. For my part, I incline to the latter opinion, and make no doubt that great sums lie buried both there and in many other parts of this island and its neighbourhood ever since the times of the buccaneers and the Dutch colonists; and I would earnestly recommend the search after them to such of my fellow-citizens as are not engaged in any other speculations. There are many conjectures formed, also, as to who and what was the strange man of the seas who had domineered over the little fraternity at Corlear's Hook for a time, disappeared so strangely, and re-appeared so fearfully.

Some supp[illegible]ed him a smuggler, stationed at that place to a[illegible] his [illegible]rades in landing their goods among [illegible] coves of the island. Othe[illegible] [illegible] of the ancie[illegible]

either of Kidd or Bradish, returned to convey away treasures formerly hidden in the vicinity. The only circumstance that throws any thing like a vague light on this mysterious matter is a report which prevailed of a strange foreign-built shallop, with much the look of a piccaroon, having been seen hovering about the Sound for several days without landing, or reporting herself, though boats were seen going to and from her at night; and that she was seen standing out of the mouth of the harbour, in the gray of the dawn, after the catastrophe of the money-diggers.

I must not omit to mention another report, also, which I confess is rather apocryphal, of the buccaneer, who was supposed to have been drowned, being seen before day-break with a lantern in his hand, seated astride his great sea-chest, and sailing through Hell-gate, which just then began to roar and bel[illegible]w with redoubled fury.

While all the gossip [illegible]us filled with

talk and rumour, poor Wolfert lay sick and sorrowful in his bed, bruised in body, and sorely beaten down in mind. His wife and daughter did all they could to bind up his wounds, both corporal and spiritual. The good old dame never stirred from his bed-side, where she sat knitting from morning till night; while his daughter busied herself about him with the fondest care. Nor did they lack assistance from abroad. Whatever may be said of the desertion of friends in distress, they had no complaint of the kind to make; not an old wife of the neighbourhood but abandoned her work to crowd to the mansion of Wolfert Webber, inquire after his health, and the particulars of his story. Not one came, moreover, without her little pipkin of pennyroyal, sage, balm, or other herb tea, delighted at an opportunity of signalizing her kindness and her doctorship.

What dr[illegible]chings did not the poo[illegible]olfert undergo, an[illegible] in v[illegible]: it was a moving sight to behold hi[illegible]way day by day; grow-

ing thinner and thinner, and ghastlier and ghastlier, and staring with rueful visage from under an old patchwork counterpane, upon the jury of matrons kindly assembled to sigh and groan, and look unhappy around him.

Dirk Waldron was the only being that seemed to shed a ray of sunshine into this house of mourning. He came in with cheery look and manly spirit, and tried to re-animate the expiring heart of the poor money-digger; but it was all in vain. Wolfert was completely done over. If any thing was wanting to complete his despair, it was a notice served upon him, in the midst of his distress, that the corporation were about to run a new street through the very centre of his cabbage-garden. He now saw nothing before him but poverty and ruin—his last reliance, the garden of his forefathers, was to be laid waste—and what then was to become of [illegible] or wife and child? His e[illegible]es filled with tears as they followed [illegible] dut[illegible] Amy out of the room one morni[illegible] Waldron was

seated beside him; Wolfert grasped his hand, pointed after his daughter, and for the first time since his illness, broke the silence he had maintained.

"I am going!" said he, shaking his head feebly; "and when I am gone—my poor daughter—"

"Leave her to me, father!" said Dirk, manfully; "I'll take care of her!"

Wolfert looked up in the face of the cheery, strapping youngster, and saw there was none better able to take care of a woman.

"Enough," said he, "she is yours!—and now fetch me a lawyer—let me make my will and die!"

The lawyer was brought, a dapper, bustling, round-headed little man—Roorback (or Rollebuck, as it was pronounced) by name. At the sight of him the women broke into loud lamentations, for the[illegible] looked upon the signing [illegible] will as the signi[illegible] of a [illegible]ath-warrant. Wolfert made a feebl[illegible] [illegible]r them to b[illegible] silent.

Poor Amy buried her face and her grief in the bed-curtain: Dame Webber resumed her knitting to hide her distress, which betrayed itself, however, in a pellucid tear which trickled silently down, and hung at the end of her peaked nose: while the cat, the only unconcerned member of the family, played with the good dame's ball of worsted, as it rolled about the floor.

Wolfert lay on his back, his night-cap drawn over his forehead; his eyes closed, his whole visage the picture of death. He begged the lawyer to be brief, for he felt his end approaching, and that he had no time to lose. The lawyer nibbed his pen, spread out his paper, and prepared to write.

"I give and bequeath," said Wolfert, faintly, "my small farm—"

"What!—all?" exclaimed the lawyer.

Wolfert half opened his eyes, and looked upon th[illegible]er.

"[illegible]—all," said h[illegible]

[illegible] all th[illegible] of la[illegible]

cabbages and sunflowers, which the corporation is just going to run a main street through?"

"The same," said Wolfert, with a heavy sigh, and sinking back upon his pillow.

"I wish him joy that inherits it!" said the little lawyer, chuckling and rubbing his hands involuntarily.

"What do you mean?" said Wolfert, again opening his eyes.

"That he'll be one of the richest men in the place!" cried little Rollebuck.

The expiring Wolfert seemed to step back from the threshold of existence; his eyes again lighted up; he raised himself in his bed, shoved back his worsted red night-cap, and stared broadly at the lawyer.

"You don't say so!" exclaimed he.

"Faith, but I do!" rejoined the other. "Why, when that great field, and that huge meadow, come to be [illegible]d out in streets, and cu[illegible] [illegible]to snug building[illegible]—[illegible] whoever own[illegible] [illegible]eed

[illegible]

"Say you so?" cried Wolfert, half thrusting one leg out of bed; "why, then, I think I'll not make my will yet!"

To the surprise of every body, the dying man actually recovered. The vital spark, which had glimmered faintly in the socket, received fresh fuel from the oil of gladness which the little lawyer poured into his soul. It once more burnt up into a flame. Give physic to the heart, ye who would revive the body of a spirit-broken man! In a few days Wolfert left his room; in a few days more his table was covered with deeds, plans of streets, and building lots. Little Rollebuck was constantly with him, his right-hand man and adviser, and instead of making his will, assisted in the more agreeable task of making his fortune.

In fact, Wolfert Webber was one of those many worthy Dutch burghers of the Manhattoes, [illegible] fortunes have been made in a manner in [illegible] themselves; [illegible] who have tenaciously held [illegible] ising turnips and

cabbages about the skirts of the city, hardly able to make both ends meet, until the corporation has cruelly driven streets through their abodes, and they have suddenly awakened out of a lethargy, and to their astonishment found themselves rich men!

Before many months had elapsed, a great bustling street passed through the very centre of the Webber garden, just where Wolfert had dreamed of finding a treasure. His golden dream was accomplished. He did indeed find an unlooked-for source of wealth; for when his paternal lands were distributed into building lots, and rented out to safe tenants, instead of producing a paltry crop of cabbages, they returned him an abundant crop of rents; insomuch that on quarter-day it was a goodly sight to see his tenants knocking at his door from morning to night, each with a little round-bellied bag of money, the golden produce of the soil

The ancient [illegible]nsion [illegible]f his forefath[illegible]
still kept up; bu[illegible]

fronted Dutch house in a garden, it now stood boldly in the midst of a street, the grand house of the neighbourhood, for Wolfert enlarged it with a wing on each side, and a cupola or tea-room on top, where he might climb up and smoke his pipe in hot weather; and in the course of time the whole mansion was overrun by the chubby-faced progeny of Amy Webber and Dirk Waldron.

As Wolfert waxed old, and rich, and corpulent, he also set up a great gingerbread-coloured carriage, drawn by a pair of black Flanders mares, with tails that swept the ground; and to commemorate the origin of his greatness, he had for his crest a full-blown cabbage painted on the pannels, with the pithy motto alles kopf, that is to say, ALL HEAD, meaning thereby, that he had risen by their head-work.

To fill the measure of his greatness, in the ...s of time the renowned Ramm Rapelye ... ith his father and W... ert Webber suc- ... he leat ... d arm-chair in

the inn parlour at Corlear's Hook, where he long reigned, greatly honoured and respected, insomuch that he was never known to tell a story without its being believed, nor to utter a joke without its being laughed at.

THE END.